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THE INTERNATIONAL WEEKLY JOURNAL OF SCIENCE

Plant embryos — like animals — pass through a stage when ancient genes take charge **PAGE 98**

THE GREEN HOURGLASS

NOBEL PRIZES

A WINNING FORMULA

What makes the great labs great?

PAGE 31

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

KEEP THE TEXT MINE OPEN

Authors Guild v. Google threatens digital humanities

PAGE 29

CAREERS

CREATURE COMFORTS

Veterinary research is about more than healing

PAGE 131

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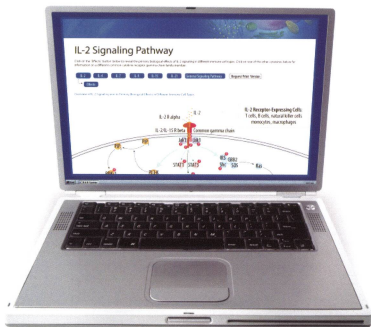
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CONTENTS

4 October 2012 / Vol 490 / Issue No 7418

THIS WEEK

EDITORIALS

5 NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION

The price of progress

Laser enrichment of uranium is a step in the wrong direction

5 ENERGY

Power cuts

There are lessons to be learned from the decline of China's renewables market

6 SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY

Life sciences

Survivors of the University of Alabama shooting spare their attacker

WORLD VIEW

7 Gene therapies need new development models

Fulvio Mavilio

Regulators hold the key to the future of gene therapy

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

8 SELECTIONS FROM THE SCIENTIFIC LITERATURE

Milky Way's hot-gas halo / Brain-wide abnormality in autism / Vampire squid exposed / Flexible LEDs / Desmoterol suppresses inflammatory response

SEVEN DAYS

10 THE NEWS IN BRIEF

French budget protects science / Spanish science faces more cuts / New coronavirus sequenced / Comet discovery / Evidence of water on Mars?

CAREERS

131 HIGHER EDUCATION

Beyond the farm

There's more to being a vet than meets the eye

133 TURNING POINT

Ethan Perlstein, the first evolutionary pharmacologist?

133 CAREER BRIEFS

NATURE JOBS ADVERTISING FEATURE

Spotlight on Texas

NEWS IN FOCUS

13 PUBLIC HEALTH

Criticism threatens to halt malaria programme

15 DRUG DEVELOPMENT

Projects aim to capitalize on forgotten pharmaceuticals

16 ASTRONOMY

NASA counts the cost of two free telescopes

19 BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH

African centre spearheads drive to beat drug-resistant TB

20 BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH

SARS experts set their sights on emerging coronavirus

21 PUBLISHING

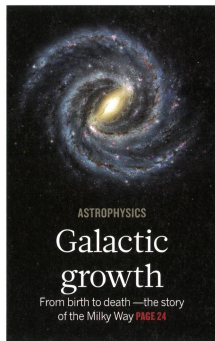
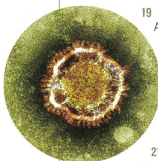
Misconduct identified as the main cause of retractions in the life sciences

FEATURES

22 PLANT SCIENCE

The chestnut resurrection

The concerted drive to revive the American chestnut



ASTROPHYSICS

Galactic growth

From birth to death—the story of the Milky Way [PAGE 24](#)

COMMENT

29 DIGITAL HUMANITIES

Don't let copyright block data mining

Matthew L. Jockers, Matthew Sag & Jason Schultz

The crucial importance of the *Authors Guild v. Google* lawsuit

31 NOBEL PRIZES

What makes a great lab?

William Bynum

The LMB shares star qualities with other research powerhouses of history

BOOKS & ARTS



ZOOLOGY

Going viral

Animal diseases threaten human survival, writes Nathan Wolfe [PAGE 33](#)

34 MARS EXPLORATION

Roving the red planet

Jim Bell

35 BOOKS IN BRIEF

36 NETWORK THEORY

The regularities of facts

Carl Bergstrom

CORRESPONDENCE

- 37 Science-based conservation / Nanoparticle safety / Cold fusion — triumph or tragedy / Unsustainable biodiesel / The value of a good review



FUTURES

136 Man's best friend

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CONTENTS

4 October 2012 / Vol 490 / Issue No 7418

RESEARCH

NEW ONLINE

39 Papers published this week at nature.com

NEWS & VIEWS

40 FORUM: CLIMATE SCIENCE

The aerosol effect

Modelling the effects of aerosol–cloud interactions on climate
Bjorn Stevens; Olivier Boucher

41 MUCOSAL IMMUNOLOGY

Infection induces friendly fire

Pathogenic gut infections can break immune tolerance of commensals
David Masopust & Vaiva Vezys

43 QUANTUM PHYSICS

Cruise control for a qubit

Monitoring and adjusting the dynamics of a quantum bit
Howard M Wiseman SEE LETTER P.77

44 GENOMICS

Resident risks

Searching for disease risk factors in the microbiome metagenome
Julia Oh & Julia A Segre SEE ARTICLE P.55

46 ASTROPHYSICS

Two black holes found in a star cluster

Deep radio images of globular cluster M22 reveal two new sources
Stefan Umbreit SEE LETTER P.71

47 IMMUNOLOGY

Tolerating pregnancy

Paternal-antigen-specific regulatory T cells accumulate in pregnancy
Alexander G Betz SEE LETTER P.102

ARTICLES

49 **GENOMICS** The oyster genome reveals stress adaptation and complexity of shell formation
G Zhang et al.

55 **GENOMICS** A metagenome-wide association study of gut microbiota in type 2 diabetes
J Qin et al. SEE N&V P.44

61 **CANCER** Comprehensive molecular portraits of human breast tumours
The Cancer Genome Atlas Network

LETTERS

71 **ASTRONOMY** Two stellar-mass black holes in the globular cluster M22
J Strader, L Chornik, T J MacCarone,

ON THE COVER

Seeds of time

As it develops from single-celled zygote to mature plant embryo, *Arabidopsis* passes through a stage when ancient genes are preferentially expressed. This mirrors the embryonic 'hourglass' recognized in animals by nineteenth-century zoologists. **PAGE 98**

J C A Miller-Jones & A C Seth SEE N&V P.46

74 **ASTRONOMY** Comet-like mineralogy of olivine crystals in an extrasolar proto-Kuiper belt
B L de Vries et al.

77 **QUANTUM PHYSICS** Stabilizing Rabi oscillations in a superconducting qubit using quantum feedback
R Vijay et al. SEE N&V P.43

81 **CLIMATE SCIENCE** Sulphate–climate coupling over the past 300,000 years in inland Antarctica
Y Iizuka et al.

85 **CLIMATE SCIENCE** Natural and anthropogenic variations in methane sources during the past two millennia
C J Sapart et al.

89 **GEOPHYSICS** Dynamical similarity of geomagnetic field reversals
J-P Valet, A Fournier, V Courtillot & E Herrero-Bervera

94 **EVOLUTION** A Silurian armoured aplousophoran and implications for molluscan phylogeny
M D Sutton, D E G Briggs, D J Siveter, D J Siveter & J D Sigwart

98 **PLANT SCIENCE** A transcriptomic hourglass in plant embryogenesis
M Quint et al.

102 **IMMUNOLOGY** Pregnancy imprints regulatory memory that sustains energy to fetal antigen
J H Rowe, J M Ertelt, L Xin & S S Way
SEE N&V P.47

107 **IMMUNOLOGY** Rapid induction of inflammatory lipid mediators by the inflammasome *in vivo*
J von Moltke et al.

112 **GENETICS** Paramutation in *Drosophila* linked to emergence of a piRNA-producing locus
A de Vries et al.

116 **CANCER** Burkitt lymphoma pathogenesis and therapeutic targets from structural and functional genomics
R Schmitz et al.

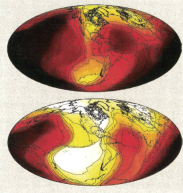
121 **STRUCTURAL BIOLOGY** Structural basis for RNA–duplex recognition and unwinding by the DEAD-box helicase Mss116p
A L Mallam, M D Campo, B Gilman, D J Sidote & A M Lambowitz

128 **STRUCTURAL BIOLOGY** Alternating-access mechanism in conformationally asymmetric trimers of the betaine transporter BetP
C Perez, C Koshy, Ö Yildiz & C Ziegler

GEOPHYSICS

Reverse gear

A consistent pattern revealed in recent geomagnetic reversals. **PAGE 89**



nature

4 October 2012 / Vol 490 / Issue No. 7418

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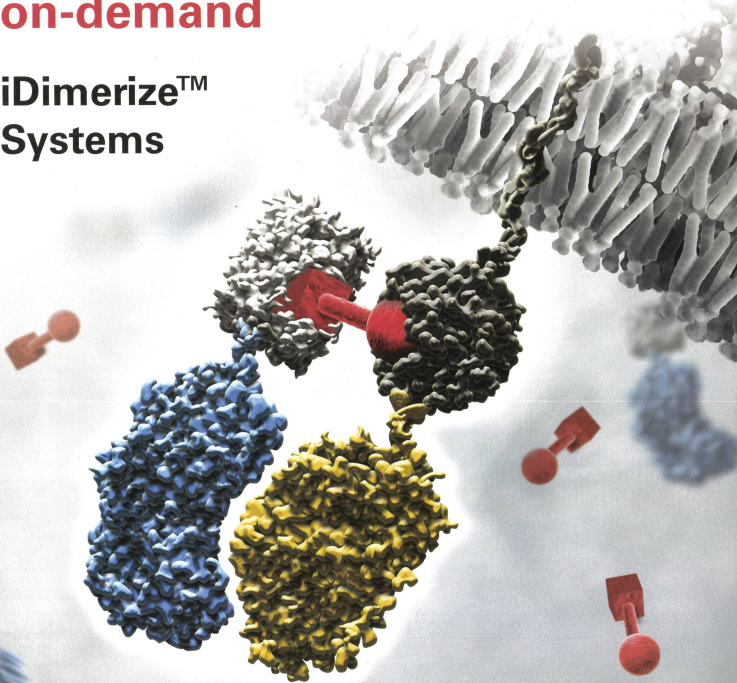
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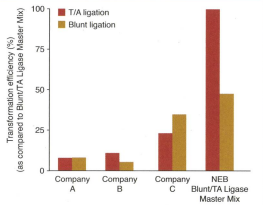
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THIS WEEK

EDITORIALS

SHOOTINGS Biologist Amy Bishop escapes death penalty for murders **p.6**

WORLD VIEW Gene-therapy success demands a new regulatory approach **p.7**



VAMPIRE SQUID Plankton and dead crustaceans, but hold the garlic **p.8**

The price of progress

A new uranium enrichment technique approved by the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission could have an impact on nuclear proliferation. This should have been taken into account.

Scientists and scientific journals are naturally inclined towards progress. But there are exceptions: progress is not always better. Last week, the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) in Rockville, Maryland, announced that it had issued a licence for a new technology to enrich uranium using lasers — a process that is potentially cheaper and better than current enrichment methods, but also politically fraught and possibly dangerous (see *Nature* <http://doi.org/jfr; 2012>). The decision was unfortunate. The NRC should introduce rules to ensure that its future moves are better informed.

Nuclear power and nuclear weapons both require uranium that has been enriched to contain higher levels of uranium-235 than occurs naturally. The 1970 nuclear non-proliferation treaty gives countries the right to possess enrichment systems, but most are subject to strict controls. Where facilities are declared as peaceful, they are subject to inspection by the International Atomic Energy Agency, which ensures that material is not diverted for military or criminal purposes. National intelligence agencies, too, keep a careful eye on the activities of friends and rivals worldwide.

Current techniques to separate uranium-235 from its heavier, non-fissile sibling uranium-238 are hard to hide. They typically involve enormous gaseous-diffusion plants, or smaller, energy-intensive centrifuge facilities that spin the two isotopes apart in high-speed machines. Both require lots of space and electricity, which means that such facilities are easy to spot with, say, satellite reconnaissance.

Lasers are more discreet. When finely tuned, they can ionize uranium-235 that can then be collected on a negatively charged plate. The new technique will require considerably less space and electricity than centrifuge or diffusion plants.

GE Hitachi, the multinational company pursuing laser enrichment, describes it as a “game-changing technology”, and those who fear nuclear proliferation agree. Understanding where enrichment facilities are and how they operate is crucial to maintaining the treaties and agreements that limit the spread of nuclear technology. When undeclared enrichment facilities are uncovered, as happened in Iran in 2009, it can spark an international crisis. Even more worrying is the possibility that some facilities can simply never be detected. Mistrust could lead to regional arms races and even open conflicts.

When the NRC approved GE Hitachi’s application for a laser enrichment plant, it considered physical security, such as the height of the fence around the plant. But the commission did not explicitly address the existential threat that a plant might pose to the non-proliferation regime, nor did it concern itself with the message that the pursuit of this technology might send to other nuclear nations.

The American Physical Society (APS), based in College Park, Maryland, would like to change that. Backed by environment groups and scientists, the society has proposed that the NRC change its regulations to require future applicants to submit a ‘proliferation review’. This would force the commission and corporations to consider the

proliferation consequences of their proposed facilities. It would also provide a public forum for debate, much as environmental-impact statements have allowed activists and citizens to query the environmental aspects of construction.

Could such a review have changed the outcome of the NRC’s licence decision? Perhaps. From a commercial standpoint, the benefit of laser enrichment is clear, but from a broader societal perspective, it is questionable. The cost of fuel for nuclear reactors is dwarfed by the cost

“To consider proliferation might seem beyond the remit of a regulator, but it is not.”

of construction, and this has stalled a nuclear renaissance in the West. A 2010 analysis showed that the savings to households would be less than US\$10 per year from laser enrichment — a saving that many homeowners might be unwilling to accept if presented with the risks the technology poses (see F. Slakey and L. R. Cohen *Nature* **464**, 32–33; 2010).

The APS’s proposed rule change will be voted on by the five NRC commissioners in November. *Nature* urges the commissioners (who were not directly involved in approving the laser enrichment system) to approve the change. To consider something as vague as proliferation might seem beyond the remit of a regulator, but it is not. Under the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, the NRC is charged with considering whether its licences would “be inimical to the common defense and security” of the US public. Nuclear technologies that are potentially destabilizing pose a threat to the security of citizens everywhere, and so the commission could rightly consider it under an altered licensing process. In the case of laser enrichment, as with other technologies, progress should be judged on more than the technical merits alone. ■

Power cuts

China’s slumping renewable-energy industry should be learnt from, not dismissed.

These are testing times for the renewable-energy boom in China. On 3 August, the head of a Chinese solar-energy company leapt to his death because his firm couldn’t pay off a loan. Last month, LDK Solar in Xinyu City cut its earnings forecast for the second consecutive time, and watched its stock drop to one-quarter of what it was a year ago after it defaulted on payments. Suntech Power in Wuxi, the world’s biggest producer of solar panels, announced plans to slash production and was forced to accept a loan worth US\$32 million from the local government to stay afloat. China’s wind-turbine manufacturers are also being forced to watch sales drop in an overcapacity market.

China—which produces more solar panels and wind turbines than any other country—likes to promote its renewable-energy industry as a glowing symbol of a technology-driven, green future. But, over the past few years, a glut in the international market, a drop in prices and import tariffs introduced by countries including the United States have left companies with over-supply and debt.

Observers have jumped on the downturn with criticisms of how the Chinese government has supported and protected renewable-energy companies. A widely quoted piece in the Shanghai-based newspaper *First Financial Daily* claimed that the slump signalled the “imminent collapse” of the country’s photovoltaics industry. A gloating editorial in *The Wall Street Journal* in August vaunted events in China to warn the US government against support for its own renewables industry.

Strong stuff, but perhaps not unexpected. It is clear that some companies overshot the market, and there are some grounds for claims that China has engaged in unfair trade practices. When the country entered renewable energy, it instituted protective measures such as requiring that 70% of turbines sold in China be produced with domestically made parts, but those measures have been removed. Many renewables firms have failed and can no longer be propped up by supportive local governments.

However, it is foolish to decide that China’s renewables industry has been—or will be—a failure on the basis of its current problems. The scale of some of these problems has been overstated. *The Wall Street Journal*, for instance, blamed decreased revenue at power companies on underperformance at wind farms, when in fact it had more to do with the increasing price of coal.

By whatever means it has been achieved—and whatever else might be said about it—China’s investment in renewables has been a remarkable project. Just seven years after a renewable-energy law threw government support behind the industry, China went from having almost

no stake in the international market to leading the manufacture of solar photovoltaics and wind turbines, in very competitive industries. China has developed know-how and manufacturing bases: it has the engineers, and it is ready to lead the industry into the future.

The country’s targets will carry the industry forward. Some 62 gigawatts of wind power are currently installed—more than in any other country—and the government has set a target of 200 gigawatts by 2020. An even bigger difference will come when the domestic demand for solar energy picks up, which it surely will. Until now, nearly all of China’s photovoltaic units have been exported; domestic use has increased but remains at a relatively low 3.1 gigawatts.

The Chinese government is establishing policies that will encourage this. A new renewable-portfolio standard, to be implemented by the end of this year, will force power companies to generate a mandatory proportion of their energy from renewables, with penalties for those that do not. An upgrade of long-distance power lines, to transfer energy from wind farms or megasolar plants in the west of China to the energy-hungry east, was approved last year. Consumers will be forced to share the burden when a surcharge on electricity from renewables kicks in.

Chinese renewable energy has certainly hit a low point. Many of the 80 or so companies that produce wind turbines will probably have to close. But what *The Wall Street Journal* called a waste of time and money can be seen as healthy competition in an immature market. As China’s renewables industry reorganizes and restructures itself, there may be reasons not to emulate it. But the government, for reasons relating to pollution, climate change and energy security, is firmly behind the industry. And it has built itself a solid platform from which to push on. ■

Life sciences

Survivors of the 2010 University of Alabama shooting chose not to push for the death penalty.

Amory Bishop, the biologist who murdered three colleagues in cold blood and grievously wounded two others, will spend the rest of her life behind bars after an Alabama court sentenced her last week. The Harvard-trained assistant professor had been denied tenure at the University of Alabama in Huntsville. In February 2010, months after her appeal against the decision failed, Bishop, a mother of four, pulled out a 9-millimetre pistol during a faculty meeting in a tiny conference room.

Without saying a word, Bishop methodically shot down fellow biologists Maria Ragland Davis, Adriel Johnson and department chairman Gopi Podilla. A bullet to the head of colleague Joseph Leahy left him, after many months of recovery, blind in his right eye and partially sighted in his left. Staff assistant Stephanie Monticicchio, the department’s mother hen, had the teeth on one side of her mouth knocked out. She sustained shattered sinuses and a broken jaw, and was blinded on one eye.

“Many, many things are better than I could have ever hoped,” Monticicchio’s adult daughter Michele posted on a blog 18 months later. “Some things, however, will never be the same.”

The same is true in the biology department at Huntsville, two and a half years after the shooting. Yet signs of a determined recovery abound. Ten new graduate students enrolled in August. The department has made university biochemist Debra Moriarity its chairwoman, and has hired two new faculty members. Leahy, a microbiologist, is back teaching full-time as of this term. And last week,

structural biologists on the faculty hosted an international conference on the crystallization of biological macromolecules, attended by more than 200 scientists.

In the state of Alabama, there are only two possible sentences for capital murder, with which Bishop, now 47, was charged: life in prison with no possibility of parole, or death by lethal injection or electrocution. Prosecutors said almost from the outset that they would seek the death penalty.

At first, Bishop pleaded not guilty “by reason of mental disease or defect”. Then, weeks before the trial was set to open last month, a heartening tale of human generosity began to unfold. It emerged that the spouse of one of the murdered biologists had written to judge Alan Mann, who would have the final say over the sentence if Bishop was found guilty. The letter-writer noted that his or her family had suffered greatly, but added that they could see no benefit in the loss of another life. The writer asked Mann to spare Bishop the death penalty.

The letter prompted Bishop to offer, through her lawyers, to change her plea to guilty if the prosecutors would drop their pursuit of the death penalty. The prosecutors sounded out the other survivors: the nine who had been in the conference room at the time of the shooting, and the families of the dead. None wanted the death penalty. A deal was reached and Bishop changed her plea to guilty.

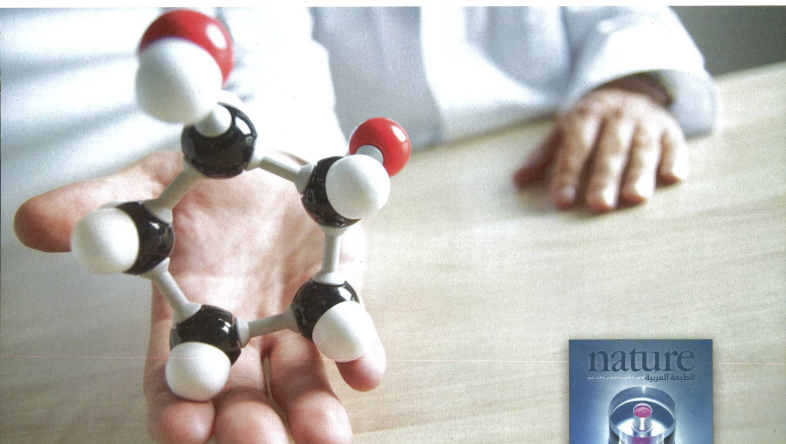
Robert Broussard, the lead prosecutor on the case, told *Nature* this week that the common sentiment among the survivors “absolutely” swayed him not to seek the ultimate punishment. And so, on 24 September, after a brief trial, Bishop was sentenced to life behind bars.

In 25 years of prosecuting murders, Broussard said, he has never seen such equanimity in so many people affected by a violent crime. Those who will spend a lifetime bearing the wounds that Amy Bishop inflicted, inside and out, reached deep and found mercy. ■

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C. BERNARD



Gene therapies need new development models

As with other medicines, the approval of gene therapies should hinge on a risk-benefit analysis for the patient, argues Fulvio Mavilio.

Is gene therapy finally becoming a reality? The European Commission is poised to authorize, for the first time in the Western world, the commercialization of a gene-therapy product. Called Glybera (alipogene tiparvovec), it is designed to treat a rare genetic defect involved in fat metabolism.

Success has been a long time coming. Gene therapy was first administered more than 20 years ago, to a child who had a rare disorder of the immune system called adenosine deaminase (ADA) deficiency. Since then, it has struggled to find its place in medicine amid a roller coaster of successes and setbacks, hype and scepticism that has little precedent in modern times. Although the approval of Glybera is a positive move, it is unlikely to herald a new age of gene therapies — not without significant changes to the system. It is no coincidence that no gene therapy has yet been approved in the United States and that no other gene-therapy product is being considered by regulators in Europe.

Here is why. The design, development and manufacture of products such as Glybera — a virus engineered to carry a correct copy of the defective gene — is complex and done mostly in academic centres. Yet legislation introduced in the past decade in Europe and the United States demands that these products be produced under the same rules that cover conventional drugs, in establishments operated with industry-like standards and certified by government agencies.

This is a formidable challenge for academic centres, which tend to lack the necessary human and financial resources. So why is the development of gene therapy focused there, and not in industry, which seems better suited?

The first reason is the financial uncertainty generated by the complex, confused and poorly harmonized regulatory environment — as the history of Glybera shows. At first, the application for its authorization received a negative opinion from two committees at the European Medicines Agency (EMA): the Committee for Advanced Therapies (CAT) and the Committee for Human Medicinal Products for Human Use (CHMP). Only when another body, the Standing Committee of the European Commission, asked the EMA to reconsider the application in a restricted indication did the CHMP eventually recommend approval under 'exceptional circumstances', requiring post-marketing studies and the set-up of a restricted-access programme. The Dutch firm Amsterdam Molecular Therapeutics, the inventor of Glybera, did not survive the process, and became known as uniQure after refinancing.

Lack of resources is a second reason. For many years, the drug industry stayed away from gene therapy, perceiving it as a dangerous technology of dubious efficacy that was too complex to develop and targeted too small a market.

There are some positive signs, because this last

**THE INDUSTRY NOW
RECOGNIZES
THAT RARE DISEASES
AND ORPHAN-DRUG
LEGISLATION PROVIDE
ATTRACTIVE
OPPORTUNITIES.**

perception, at least, is changing: the industry now recognizes that rare diseases and orphan-drug legislation provide attractive opportunities. Some recombinant proteins and monoclonal antibodies originally developed as orphan drugs have been repurposed for larger indications.

An example of how academia and industry could cooperate comes from the recent alliance between the drug giant GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) in London, and the charity-funded San Raffaele Telethon Institute for Gene Therapy (TIGET) in Milan, Italy. GSK gained an exclusive licence to develop and commercialize the ADA treatment, and will co-develop with TIGET gene therapies for six more genetic diseases. The contribution of public or charity-funded organizations in early development phases lowers the cost and risk of investing in diseases with a tiny market, and gives the industry access to technologies that can be expanded to more profitable applications, thereby repaying the investment and allowing resources to be fed back into rare diseases. Unfortunately, promising therapies for hundreds of orphan diseases are unlikely to attract similar industrial interest.

So, how do we ensure that scientists will continue to develop such treatments? Should they all turn to the 'hospital exemption', which permits experimental therapies to be manufactured and used under the responsibility of a physician without regulatory supervision?

That should not become standard practice. Governments, funding agencies, scientists and patients' associations must together come up with new models. Public funds could be used to pay for centralized manufacturing facilities or to subsidize enterprises with the necessary expertise to get involved, as is done for vaccines. And regulators should look again at product definition and the pathway to market.

The complex combination that forms the basis of the ADA therapy makes it somewhere between a biotherapeutic and a transplantable organ, so it hardly meets the definition of a 'medicinal product' and should therefore be regulated differently. Moreover, the amount of preclinical data and post-treatment monitoring currently required to authorize a treatment is hardly justified when preclinical models are uninformative and patients have no therapeutic alternatives.

The major factor in deciding whether to authorize an experimental treatment should be a risk-benefit analysis for the patients. Applying a different standard to gene therapy is unfair, slows down its development, discourages investment and ultimately denies people the right to have timely access to possible cures. ■

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RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

Selections from the scientific literature

ASTRONOMY

Missing Galactic baryons spotted

More than half of the expected number of baryons — subatomic particles that make up our everyday world, such as protons and neutrons — in the Milky Way are unaccounted for, but Anjali Gupta of Ohio State University in Columbus and her colleagues seem to have spotted the missing matter. They analysed X-ray satellite data and found evidence of a hot gas halo around the Galaxy extending for 100 kiloparsecs. The authors estimate the mass of the halo to be between 10 billion and 60 billion times the mass of the Sun. The cloud could account for the missing particles, they conclude.

Astrophys. J. Lett. 756, L8 (2012)

ZOOLOGY

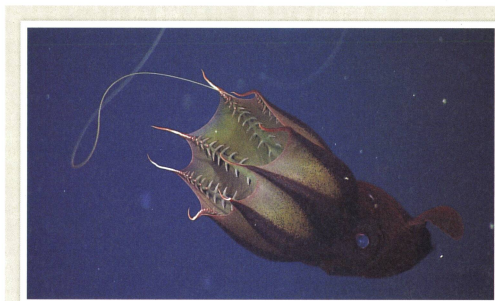
Mother's stress slows learning

Female sticklebacks that are confronted by predators while producing eggs generate offspring with impaired learning abilities.

Katie McGhee of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and her colleagues used a fake predator to repeatedly chase one set of female threespined sticklebacks (*Gasterosteus aculeatus*; pictured), while leaving another set to produce their eggs in peace. Adult offspring from both groups



B. WATTELANDY



ANIMAL BEHAVIOUR

Feeding habits of the vampire squid

Drifting in the deep ocean, the vampire squid (*Vampyroteuthis infernalis*; pictured) has features of both octopuses and squid. Researchers have now worked out what and how this mysterious creature eats.

V. infernalis — which is related to octopuses and squid — has eight arms and, instead of the feeding tentacles used by squid to capture prey, has two long, retractile filaments. Hendrik Hoving and Bruce Robison at the Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute in Moss Landing, California, studied the feeding behaviour of

V. infernalis using deep-sea video recordings, lab feeding studies and morphological examinations. They conclude that the filaments help the animals to capture food, which includes zooplankton, crustacean remains and even faeces.

The filaments are homologous to the arms of octopuses and other cephalopods, although the creatures' feeding habits are very different, the authors suggest.

Proc. R. Soc. B <http://dx.doi.org/10.1098/rspb.2012.1357> (2012)

NEUROSCIENCE

Responses vary in autistic brains

Autism may emerge from a general unreliability of neuronal responses in the brain's cortex, rather than from a deficiency in one particular brain area or circuit.

Ilan Dinstein at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and his colleagues studied 14 people with autism and 14 people without the disorder. The researchers

used functional magnetic resonance imaging to monitor cortical responsiveness as they stimulated the participants' sight, hearing and touch in dozens of trials.

Responses in the visual, auditory and somatosensory areas of the cortex all varied much more between trials for the volunteers with autism than for the controls. The authors propose that this may reflect inappropriate development of neuronal connections, or synapses, in the autistic brain.

Neuron 75, 981–991 (2012)

ATHEROSCLEROSIS

Fatty plaque link to inflammation

A major constituent of the fatty arterial plaques seen in heart disease may dampen the inflammation that drives the disease. A cholesterol-precursor molecule may be a mediator of this suppression.

Atherosclerosis progresses as cholesterol-filled immune cells called macrophage foam cells accumulate in arterial walls. Christopher Glass at the University of California, San Diego, and his colleagues found that in mice fed a high-fat, high-cholesterol diet, these cells were linked to suppression of inflammation. Within the foam cells, desmosterol, an intermediate in the cholesterol biosynthesis pathway, accumulated to significantly higher levels than did other intermediates. Moreover, desmosterol was also abundant in human atherosclerotic lesions. In the mice, desmosterol seemed to suppress genes that promote inflammation during foam-cell formation.

Synthetic formulations of desmosterol might intervene in cardiovascular disease, the authors suggest. *Cell* 151, 138–152 (2012)

ASTRONOMY

Homing in on a black hole's jets

Astronomers have for the first time located the launch site of a giant, high-speed jet of

charged particles believed to originate from a supermassive black hole.

Black holes suck up large amounts of gas and dust, which swirl around the black hole and are thought to feed these jets (simulated image pictured). Shepherd Doleman of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Haystack Observatory in Westford and his colleagues linked four radio dishes in California, Arizona and Hawaii to make a single large telescope. Using this, they examined the jets' source region, which lies just outside the 6.2-billion-solar-mass black hole at the centre of the galaxy M87.

The launch site was small, suggesting two key properties about the gravitational giant: the black hole spins, and it feeds on a surrounding disk of material that orbits it in the same direction as its spin.

Science <http://dx.doi.org/10.1126/science.1224768> (2012)

For a longer story on this research, see go.nature.com/tqrwg6

CELL BIOLOGY

A way to catch dividing cells

A genetic tool can help biologists to pinpoint rare, replicating cells in tissue samples from adult mice.

Finding and studying dividing cells is important in learning about growth, healing and other key processes, but researchers have been hindered by the difficulty of isolating these cells alive. To overcome this problem, Amir Eden at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and his colleagues created a mouse strain in which the gene for a fluorescent protein was fused to a gene that is active when cells divide. After dissecting livers from these mice, the researchers could sort dividing from non-dividing cells and compare their gene expression. Genes

COMMUNITY CHOICE

The most viewed papers in science

ELECTRONICS

Bendable battery yields flexible LED

HIGHLY READ
on pubs.acs.org
in August

Thanks to an energy-dense flexible lithium-ion battery, researchers have built a thin, bendable light source using an organic light-emitting diode (LED).

The device could one day be incorporated into rollable or implantable electronics.

Lithium-ion batteries are among the best candidates for flexible power sources, but their electrodes could previously be made with only a few, low-performing materials. Now, Keon Jae Lee at the Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology in Daejeon and his colleagues have created a bendable battery by using existing methods to apply lithium-based electrodes onto a brittle mica surface at high temperature and then peel off the mica substrate. They then used a technique that they had devised to transfer the battery onto a flexible polymer. The method allows the incorporation into a flexible battery of almost all the high-performance materials that are used in rigid batteries.

Nano Lett. 12, 4810–4816 (2012)

for liver specialization, or differentiation, were less active in replicating cells.

This fluorescent marker could help scientists to isolate and study dividing cells in multiple tissues and biological assays.

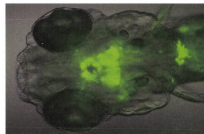
Dev. Cell <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.devcel.2012.08.009> (2012)

NEUROSCIENCE

Zebrafish find light without eyes

Eyeless zebrafish larvae may still find their way out of darkness by the activation of light-sensitive neurons deep inside the brain.

Harold Burgess at the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development in Bethesda, Maryland, and his team found that the transparent zebrafish larvae (*Danio rerio*; pictured, with certain brain cells in green) swim gradually towards the illuminated areas of their tank, even after their eyes have been removed. This behaviour suggests the



presence of light-responsive neurons outside the conventional visual organs. Engineered eyeless fish that express less *Opn4a* — a light-sensitive molecule in the brain — responded poorly to light, whereas fish that produced more *Opn4a* performed better.

The researchers conclude that neurons expressing *Opn4a* in the preoptic area of the brain may support simple, and perhaps primordial, light-seeking behaviours.

Curr. Biol. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.cub.2012.08.016> (2012)

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SEVEN DAYS

The news in brief

POLICY

French science safe

France's research and higher-education ministry received a 2.2% boost in the government's 2013 austerity budget on 28 September, escaping the cuts imposed on many other ministries. The increase will pay for 1,000 new university posts. Funding for research grants will also rise by 1.2% to €7.86 billion (US\$10.1 billion) — a cut in real terms if inflation averages above 1.75% as expected. See go.nature.com/7ialrr for more.

Campuses struggle

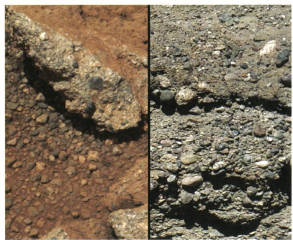
State funding for US public research universities has been insufficient to keep pace with rising student enrolment over the past decade, according to a report by the National Science Board. Between 2002 and 2010, state funding per student dropped in 43 of the 50 states, with cuts as high as 48%. The board warns that the trend threatens to severely hinder research and development at the nation's 101 major public institutions, which train the majority of US scientists and engineers.

Spanish pain

Spain's research and development budget will be cut for a fourth year if the draft budget for 2013 is approved. Presented to parliament on 29 September, the draft budget reduces science spending to €5.9 billion (US\$7.6 billion) — €461 million or 7.2% less than in 2012. See go.nature.com/msiepf for more.

US cuts loom

Federal research and development funds in the United States could be slashed by US\$57.5 billion over the next five years under an across-the-board budget cut that is due to come into effect



Ancient stream on Mars

NASA's Mars rover Curiosity has discovered evidence that water flowed at the bottom of Gale Crater billions of years ago. Although scientists have found many hints of water on Mars before this discovery, rounded gravel pieces photographed by Curiosity (left) are similar to rocky outcrops on Earth (right). These suggest that the stream flowed at speeds of around one metre per second and was at least ankle-deep. See go.nature.com/fyogfs for more.

on 2 January 2013, according to an analysis released on 27 September. The analysis, by the American Association for the Advancement of Science based in Washington DC, predicts that the National Institutes of Health stands to lose US\$11.3 billion, or 7.6%, from its R&D budget as a result of the 'sequester' unless Congress can agree on an alternative budget plan to lower the federal deficit. See go.nature.com/jjrl1y8 for more.

Nuclear concerns

Plans to build a controversial type of uranium enrichment plant were given the green light by the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission on 25 September. Critics fear that the technology to be used at the facility in Wilmington, North Carolina, proposed

by General Electric–Hitachi Global Laser Enrichment, could lead to the proliferation of nuclear weapons. See page 5 for more.

Fusion failure

The National Ignition Facility, a US\$3.5-billion laser fusion facility at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in Livermore, California, did not meet a 30 September congressional deadline for 'ignition' (see *Nature* 483, 133–134; 2012). That is the point at which the energy produced by the fusion process surpasses that put into the laser shot to trigger fusion.

Mars mission plan

NASA's Mars programme should retain a focus on searching for evidence of past life, rather than on looking for

life today, according to a study released on 25 September. The report, by NASA's Mars Program Planning Group, comes in the wake of the agency's withdrawal from international missions in 2016 and 2018. NASA's next Mars mission is likely to be either an orbiter in 2018 or a rover in 2020, the study suggests. See go.nature.com/wldhwn for more.

Saved species list

At its conference in Jeju, South Korea, earlier this month, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) agreed to produce a 'green list' of fully conserved species. The news was announced last week by the Wildlife Conservation Society, based in New York, who co-sponsored the motion. The list will serve as a counterpoint to the IUCN's 'red list' of endangered species. See go.nature.com/tqhvdb for more.

BUSINESS

Trials monitor

In an announcement on 26 September, the US Department of Health and Human Services charged the Food and Drug Administration with monitoring whether data for clinical trials of drugs and medical devices are incomplete, false or misleading, and notifying the companies responsible. It is unclear, however, what the penalties will be for companies that fail to comply. See go.nature.com/tv24eb for more.

RESEARCH

Coronavirus cases

Scientists in the Netherlands have deposited the full sequence of a new coronavirus that is thought to have caused a respiratory illness in a person

NASA AND FSI/JPL-CALTECH/NASA

from Saudi Arabia who died from the infection in June (GenBank accession number JX869059; see go.nature.com/g343qd). The sequence matches the partial sequence of a virus from another patient with similar symptoms who was transferred from intensive care in Qatar to London in early September. See page 20 for more.

Ape habitat shrinks

The first continent-wide survey of African great-ape habitat has reported a massive decline between 1995 and 2010. A paper published on 23 September (J. Junker *et al. Divers. Distrib.* <http://doi.org/jfv>; 2012) shows that Cross River gorillas (*Gorilla gorilla diehli*) have experienced a 59% loss in their habitat during this period; bonobos (*Pan paniscus*) 29%; and central chimpanzees (*Pan troglodytes troglodytes*) 17%. See go.nature.com/brixf for more.

Bas-Congo virus

A virus that causes fever and bleeding and that killed two teenagers and infected a nurse in the Democratic Republic of Congo in 2009 has been identified as a new form of rhabdovirus (pictured). According to a paper published on 27 September, Bas-Congo virus is from the same family as rabies, and



antibody tests suggest that it could be transmissible between humans (G. Grand *et al. PLoS Pathog.* 8, e1002924; 2012).

Comet discovery

The discovery of comet C/2012 S1 (ISON) was announced by the International Astronomical Union's Central Bureau for Astronomical Telegrams in Cambridge, Massachusetts, on 24 September. The comet is named after the International Scientific Optical Network, which includes the Russian-based telescope that spotted it. Some astronomers suggest that the comet might be bright enough to be seen during the day at around the time it brushes past the Sun in November 2013; however, such early predictions often prove unreliable.

Element 113

Researchers in Japan have found their third atom of element 113 — a feat that

could give them the right to name it. Russian and US researchers may already have created atoms of the element in earlier experiments, but their attempts failed to satisfy the body of experts responsible for deciding on the matter. The experts, drawn from the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry and the International Union of Pure and Applied Physics, have yet to report on the Japanese claim. See go.nature.com/cxj91x for more.

PEOPLE

Ecologist dies

Pioneering environmentalist, ecologist and one time US presidential candidate Barry Commoner died on 30 September, aged 95. The scientist rallied against poverty, pollution and nuclear testing and had a key role in the first Earth Day in 1970. He ran unsuccessfully for president in 1980, garnering 234,000 votes.

Chemist accused

A Russian chemist accused of aiding attempted drug trafficking is reportedly facing fresh charges. Olga Zelenina, a narcotics expert at the Penza Agricultural Institute, was released on 25 September from pre-trial detention. But according to Russian news reports, she has since been

COMING UP

7 OCTOBER

Private spaceflight firm SpaceX, based in Hawthorne, California, is hoping to launch its first NASA-contracted cargo-resupply mission to the International Space Station. www.spacex.com

8-10 OCTOBER

The winners of the 2012 Nobel prizes in physiology or medicine, physics and chemistry are announced in Stockholm. www.nobelprize.org

accused by the Russian Federal Drug Control Service of having produced her report on the amount of opiates in a seized shipment of Spanish opium poppy seeds without the necessary permission from her institute — even though the report bears the signature of her institute director, Alexander Smirnov has not responded to *Nature's* request for clarification.

Polar expert cleared

Charles Monnett, a researcher at the US interior department's Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, headquartered in Washington DC, has been cleared of scientific misconduct after a government investigation. Monnett had been accused of publishing false data in a paper that suggested four drowned polar bears had died while swimming in search of sea ice (C. Monnett and J. S. Gleason *Polar Biol.* 29, 681-687; 2006). He was, however, reprimanded for leaking government documents that later helped environmental groups to sue the government. See go.nature.com/dfio5o for more.

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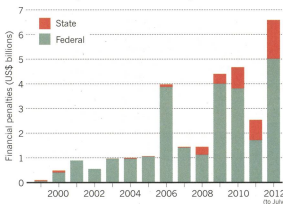
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TREND WATCH

Pharmaceutical companies paid a record amount in malpractice fines in the United States in the first half of 2012. A report by Public Citizen, a consumer group based in Washington DC, found that by 18 July, US\$5 billion in federal settlements and \$1.6 billion in state settlements had been made for activities such as illegal marketing and overcharging of government medical programmes. Settlements with individual states have steadily increased since 2009.

US PHARMA FINES

Penalties paid out by pharmaceutical companies in the United States have already reached record levels this year.





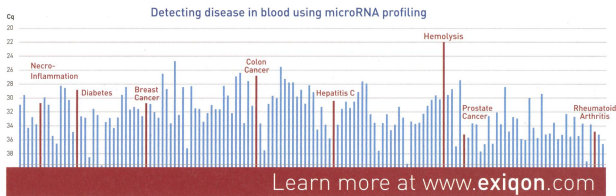
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NEWS IN FOCUS



ASTRONOMY Spy agency bequeaths space telescopes to science **p.16**



INFECTIOUS DISEASE Lab will tackle TB in South African stronghold **p.19**

MISCONDUCT Fraud drives most retractions — but journals are keeping mum **p.21**

ASTRONOMY The rough-and-tumble life cycle of the Milky Way **p.24**

R. BOURGEOIS/GLOBAL FUND



Under the Affordable Medicines Facility – Malaria programme, shopkeepers sell malaria treatments alongside groceries and over-the-counter medicines.

PUBLIC HEALTH

Malaria plan under scrutiny

Lack of data and donor uncertainty leave public-health experiment on the rocks.

BY AMY MAXMEN

Is showering a country with low-cost malaria drugs the best way to stem the disease? As a US\$463-million pilot programme to test the strategy in seven African countries winds down, public-health experts are questioning whether the approach makes sense given shrinking global health budgets and a steady decline in malaria prevalence.

Although no official decision has been announced about whether to continue the programme, known as the Affordable Medicines Facility – Malaria (AMFm), many of those familiar with it have told *Nature* that it

must change or be phased out after this year.

"For me, the problem is that it has not been proven that the AMFm made a difference to malaria," says Alan Court, senior adviser to the United Nations special envoy for malaria. "There has to be a public-health purpose or else there is no purpose." Court is chair of the working group expected to recommend a path for the programme's future on 14–15 November during a board meeting of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, which is based in Geneva, Switzerland, and oversees the AMFm.

When the AMFm was conceived in 2004, malaria rates in developing countries were skyrocketing, in part because the malaria-causing parasite *Plasmodium falciparum* had become resistant to the drug chloroquine. Officials worried that resistance would also develop to artemisinin — a newer and more effective drug — if people did not combine it with other therapies, but such combinations were much more expensive than either chloroquine or artemisinin alone.

The AMFm aims to make artemisinin-based combination therapies (ACTs) readily available and affordable in malaria-ridden countries by relying on the free market for ▶

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Read more in
Nature's Outlook
on malaria:
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► their distribution. The AMFm subsidizes ACTs for drug importers in the pilot countries (Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Nigeria, Niger, Uganda and Tanzania), who then distribute the drugs to public and private vendors at low cost. Vendors can sell the drugs to anyone, even people who have not been diagnosed with malaria. The point is to make the drugs accessible to those who would otherwise not get them — such as children and people in rural areas. “I grew up very far from public-health facilities” in Cameroon, says Emmanuel Nfor, acting director of the AMFm, “so to me, the AMFm is not only a good idea, it is an excellent idea.”

Yet, although the AMFm subsidized 60% of the world's supply of ACTs last year, it is unclear how many of the drugs reached the pilot programme's target populations. Because anyone can buy the pills, people who can afford them may take them whenever they feel ill, whether or not malaria is the culprit. And although children under the age of five account for 86% of malaria deaths worldwide, the AMFm estimates that in 2011, only 36% of the subsidized ACTs bought by the private sector were for children's formulations.

The Global Fund commissioned an independent evaluation by ICF International, a consulting firm in Fairfax, Virginia, and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM), UK, to look at the impact of the AMFm, but it has not settled the debate over the programme's effectiveness. “We see that the AMFm has been a game-changer in the private for-profit sector,” says Sarah Tougher, a health economist at the LSHTM and part of the committee that evaluated the study (the preliminary report is available at go.nature.com/nsc6ck). According to Tougher, large changes in the price and availability of ACTs, as well as the share of the market supplied by private vendors, “were achieved in just a few months.”

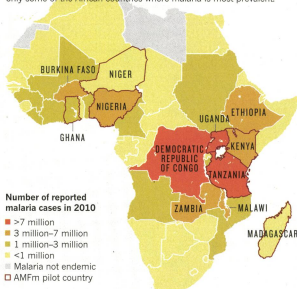
But these benchmarks miss the point, says Mohga Kamal-Yanni, a senior health adviser at Oxfam GB in Oxford, UK. “You don't need a huge independent evaluation to calculate that a huge subsidy will permit shopkeepers to buy

and sell more of a drug,” she says. “Sales don't mean anything unless you know who the sales are for.”

Testing before treatment was not considered essential when the AMFm was proposed because easy-to-use diagnostic tests were not available at the time. They are now, and they are also more relevant than they were in 2004 because malaria prevalence has declined

HOT ZONES

The Affordable Medicines Facility – Malaria (AMFm) project includes only some of the African countries where malaria is most prevalent.



since then. Today, in some AMFm-supported nations, a child with a fever is as likely to have pneumonia or another fever-inducing ailment as to have malaria.

With no way to know how much of the subsidized drugs have been wasted, leaders in global health will struggle to convince donors that the programme is cost effective. No one has yet stepped forward to fund the next phase, and the AMFm working group is debating modifications and exit strategies. “We are grappling with the cost of all of this,” Court says. “For example, we know that the vast majority of people who die of malaria are children; should we just target them?”

In one future scenario, a transformed AMFm would subsidize paediatric doses, which cost less than the adult formulations.

But Albert Peter Okui, a programme manager for the National Malaria Control Programme in Kampala, Uganda, points out that adults could simply take multiple children's doses if their versions are no longer on store shelves.

Another option is to reduce subsidies in countries with smaller burdens of malaria. Court says that this could allow for an expansion of the programme beyond the pilot countries, which were selected on the basis not only of malaria burden but also because private shops were heavily involved in drug distribution and because the countries had handled prior Global Fund grants effectively. An expanded programme could potentially reach countries such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, which in 2010 has more reported cases of malaria than four of the pilot countries — Ghana, Madagascar, Niger and Nigeria — combined (see ‘Hot Zones’).

The United States, represented by the President's Malaria Initiative, has a seat in the AMFm working group. In a document posted online on 28 September, the initiative states its concerns with the programme, including the overuse of ACTs by people who did not need them. The United States did not support the AMFm pilot directly because officials questioned whether a top-down subsidy to importers would get drugs to the most vulnerable groups.

Ultimately, donors will dictate whether the AMFm marches on, says Oliver Sabot, executive vice-president at the Clinton Health Access Initiative in Boston, Massachusetts, and a member of the AMFm working group. “People are committed to working their hearts out to find technical solutions,” he says, “but if there's not enough funding we will need to roll back the whole thing.”

So much uncertainty just weeks before the decision is nerve-racking for officials in the pilot countries and for drug importers, hospitals and small pharmaceutical companies that depend on the subsidies. “We should be told about this,” says Sigbert Mkude, a programme officer at the National Malaria Control Programme in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. “We have little information about what comes next.” ■

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FROM THE BLOG



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Progeria is one condition that has benefited from a redeployment of 'failed' drugs.

DRUG DEVELOPMENT

New cures sought from old drugs

Researchers to re-examine compounds shelved by industry.

BY MEREDITH WADMAN

Progeria is a rare, lethal disease that ages children so rapidly that they seem to be 80 years old when they are just 10. So patients and families celebrated the news last week of the first therapeutic success against the disease — as did advocates of the notion that abandoned drugs can rise again. A clinical trial has shown improved symptoms in children with the disease who used lonafarnib (L. B. Gordon *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA* <http://doi.org/jfz; 2012>), a drug developed by Merck in the 1990s that failed against its original target, head and neck cancer.

If resurrecting an ineffective drug works for progeria, why not for other conditions, asks Francis Collins, director of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in Bethesda, Maryland, whose lab in 2003 identified the mutated gene that causes progeria. "And why not seek those answers by 'crowd-sourcing'?" he asks.

Roughly 30,000 drugs have been shelved by the pharmaceutical industry over the past three decades, and medical funders are now inviting researchers to find a new future for some of them. This month, the UK Medical Research Council is expected to announce the

initial awards in a £10-million (US\$16-million) programme aimed at repurposing 22 stalled compounds developed by London-based AstraZeneca. And this week, the NIH's National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences (NCATS) will solicit the first full applications to a similar programme it launched in May.

NCATS invited researchers to look for new uses for 58 abandoned compounds contributed by eight big drug companies. All were taken through preclinical testing and into early human trials at a cost of millions of dollars, and all were found to be safe. They were abandoned either for lack of efficacy or for business reasons.

The planned budget for the NCATS programme is just \$20 million in 2013, but the competition seems to be fierce: by mid-August, the agency had received nearly 160 pre-applications for a maximum of eight awards. Kathy Hudson, acting deputy director of NCATS, says that the pre-applications sought to attack conditions as diverse as autism, Alzheimer's disease and cancer. For many compounds, multiple uses

were conceived; for one compound alone, the agency received seven applications targeting six diseases or conditions.

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For details on the NCATS drugs, see: go.nature.com/u4li4r

This week, the most promising will be asked to submit full applications.

The winners, to be announced in June 2013, will have to provide preclinical evidence of the biological rationale for the compound's new use. The company then gets to decide whether it wants to take that finding any further.

John LaMattina, former president of global research and development at Pfizer in New York, thinks that the programme faces long odds because drug companies have already tested these compounds against many targets. "There has been an awful lot of hype," says LaMattina, who is now a senior partner at PureTech Ventures, a life-sciences venture-capital company in Boston, Massachusetts. Any new finding by an NIH grant recipient, he adds "is going to have to be pretty compelling for a company to take it forward".

Steven Potkin, a psychiatrist at the University of California, Irvine, worries that even compelling findings may not be enough to persuade companies to reinvest in a shelved compound. Potkin wants to repurpose a compound originally aimed at depression that he thinks could help with mood-regulation problems across a range of psychiatric diseases from bipolar disorder to schizophrenia. But the NIH requires the participating companies to share the intellectual property created if grant recipients find new uses for a compound; a company can then license it back to develop the drug. "There is no guarantee that this will happen," Potkin says.

Hudson says the companies have agreed that, if they are not interested, the academic partner can either purchase the agent from the company, or have it manufactured by a third party, so that the push towards the clinic can still proceed. Then, "if the company elects not to pursue the new indication, all is not lost", Hudson says.

Chemists are grumbling about a different issue: the companies have not released the structures of the 58 compounds (although the programme's winners will learn the structures of their compounds).

"This project has required a delicate dance to get industry to share compounds and data." That has led to a "tremendous waste of effort" for chemists trying to deduce any new activities that the compounds might have, says Jeremy Berg, former director of the NIH's National Institute of General Medical Sciences in Bethesda, and now a computational and systems biologist at the University of Pittsburgh in Pennsylvania.

But some say that the NIH had to meet the industry halfway. "This project has required a delicate dance to get industry to share compounds and data," said Thomas Insel, who was acting director of NCATS until 23 September, in an August e-mail to Berg. "My hope is that if this first step goes well, we can expect more sharing in the future." ■

ASTRONOMY

The telescopes that came in from the cold

Twin spy telescopes could drive US space astronomy forward, but at what cost?

BY ERIC HAND

When astronomer Alan Dressler was invited to see what might be the future of NASA's astrophysics programme, he had to leave his mobile phone behind, lest he be tempted to grab a quick snapshot. As he and a dozen others passed through the ITT Exelis facility in Rochester, New York, a guide held up a flashing red light, to warn working Exelis engineers to seal their lips in front of people without security clearance.

Their destination was the cavernous clean area of Building 1230, where two 2.4-metre telescopes, each as big as the Hubble Space Telescope and never flown, rested on low pedestals. "It seemed almost too good to be true," says Dressler, an astronomer at the Carnegie Observatories in Pasadena, California. "Things like this just don't drop on your doorstep."

The unexpected gift comes from the US National Reconnaissance Office (NRO), a secretive surveillance agency that built the telescopes to peer down on Earth. In June, NASA revealed that the NRO had bequeathed the scopes to the space agency because they were no longer needed. Now NASA has to figure out what it will do with them — and whether it can afford the cost of kitting them out with instruments and sending them into orbit.

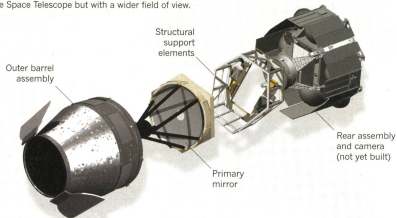
This month, NASA plans to announce a science-definition team that will embark on that assessment. The team will report by April 2013 to NASA administrator Charles Bolden on the pros, cons and costs of adapting one of the telescopes for a mission to investigate dark energy, the phenomenon thought to be accelerating the expansion of the Universe. But astronomers are already encouraged. As the veil of secrecy surrounding the telescopes lifts, astronomers are beginning to size up the devices' capabilities. And so far, they are liking what they see — so much so that they are now talking about tacking on an instrument that would detect extrasolar planets directly. "I think the enthusiasm has only increased as time has gone on," says Dressler.

The most likely first use for an NRO telescope is as an alternative to the proposed Wide-Field

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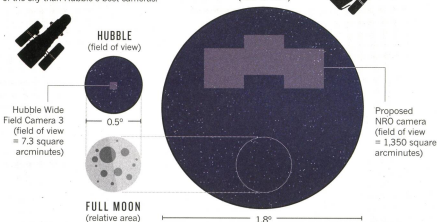
ANATOMY OF A GIFT

The National Reconnaissance Office (NRO), a US spy agency, has given NASA two telescopes, each with a primary mirror as big as that in the Hubble Space Telescope but with a wider field of view.



FIELD OF VIEW

Camera detectors built for the NRO telescope could potentially survey much bigger swathes of the sky than Hubble's best cameras.



Infrared Space Telescope (WFIRST), the top-ranked mission in the 2010 astronomy decadal survey. Before the NRO telescopes came along, astronomers were aiming for a wide-field 1.3-metre survey telescope to search for the imprint of dark energy, to find exoplanets and to study star-forming regions of the Galaxy. WFIRST was not expected to fly until the mid 2020s. But with a telescope already in hand, the NRO version of a WFIRST mission could conceivably launch at the end of the decade — potentially challenging Europe's Euclid space telescope, a

dark-energy mission scheduled to fly in 2019.

The NRO telescope suits the WFIRST mission because it has a much wider field of view than Hubble (see 'Anatomy of a gift'), which makes it perfect for spotting the thousands of supernovae and millions of galaxies needed to pin down dark energy. And at a workshop held last month at Princeton University in New Jersey, Gary Matthews, the director of astronomy at ITT Exelis, released data showing how smoothly the telescope's mirror had been polished. "The mirror is about

as good as Hubble's," he says.

The telescope's supporting structure is made of a resin that resists distortions caused by temperature changes, which will help keep the main mirror stable. Active control of a secondary mirror could adjust it to correct for any distortions due to the main mirror, further sharpening the telescope's optics.

"This telescope was clearly designed to produce very stable images," says Matt Mountain, director of the Space Telescope Science Institute in Baltimore, Maryland. And extremely stable images will be crucial for the success of one particular dark-energy technique — weak lensing — which looks for subtle distortions in the shapes of galaxies due to intervening dark matter (see *Nature* 489, 190–191; 2012).

Astronomers acknowledge that the telescope will not be ideal for studying the most distant galaxies in the Universe, which are visible only in the infrared. That requires a system for cooling the mirror but, unlike the proposed WFIRST instrument, the NRO telescope is designed to work at room temperature. However, its larger mirror will have so much more light-gathering power that it will be able to spot many more faint objects nearer to hand, even if it can't stare as deeply into space.

COSTS AND BENEFITS

Some astronomers, however, are questioning whether the value of the free hardware — each NRO telescope is worth at least US\$250 million — can compensate for the extra costs entailed in going from a 1.3-metre mission to a 2.4-metre mission, which will require a larger rocket and a larger camera. Although the WFIRST mission was expected to cost \$1.5 billion, one NASA estimate puts the NRO option at \$1.75 billion.

But Princeton astronomer David Spergel, who organized the workshop, believes that that figure underestimates the savings to be made by using the NRO scope. Not having to cast and polish a primary mirror avoids a long, labour-intensive process requiring an army of technicians, he says. Spergel thinks that a \$1.6-billion mission is realistic.

He would bump up the cost another \$200 million, however, to add an instrument that could take advantage of the extra light-gathering capability of the NRO telescope. This would be a coronagraph, which can block the light of a star while still revealing the dim glow of orbiting planets. WFIRST was going to search for exoplanets by detecting gravitational-lensing events: distortions in the light of a background star caused by a large planet orbiting another star in the foreground. But that method would not easily allow astronomers to detect planets that orbit close enough to be within a star's habitable zone. Astronomers would also prefer to collect a planet's reflected light directly. Mountain says that a modern coronagraph on NRO-WFIRST might be able to detect a Neptune-sized planet. It could

also survey the dust that shrouds many stars and that could block small planets from view. Knowing how ubiquitous and severe the dust problem is would help exoplanet astronomers work out just how big their next big ask — a mission to directly detect Earth-like planets — has to be.

HUMAN INVOLVEMENT

One way to reduce the cost of the NRO-WFIRST mission for NASA's astrophysics division would be to launch it on one of the new fleet of rockets that NASA will be eager to test at the end of the decade as it moves beyond the now-grounded space shuttles. But that would involve NASA's human space programme, an option that the science-definition team has been asked to consider. It could mean moving the mission from its intended orbit around the Sun — at a dynamically stable spot known as a Lagrangian point some 1.5 million kilometres beyond Earth's orbit — to a geostationary orbit about 36,000 kilometres above Earth (still much further out than Hubble). The geostationary option would be within reach of a wider variety of rockets — and of potential servicing missions by astronauts.

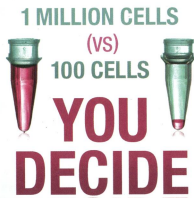
Although a Lagrangian point is a better spot for astrophysical observations because, for example, it lies outside Earth's radiation belts and has a more constant temperature environment, a geostationary orbit would allow much higher data-transfer rates, which would be particularly important in a survey mission accumulating vast amounts of data.

Astrophysicists believe that they are following the most sensible path for repurposing the NRO hardware, but they are aware that other space scientists wouldn't mind a crack at it too. One idea presented at the Princeton workshop was to investigate Earth's aurora and ionosphere by

"It seemed too good to be true. Things like this just don't drop on your doorstep."

observing the edge of Earth from a vantage point within the orbit of the Moon. This proposal might need special approval, however, as one of the NRO's stipulations for donating the telescopes was that they would not be used to look at Earth. Such a large telescope could also be useful in planetary science, to search for asteroids likely to pass close to Earth or to study the faint objects beyond Neptune's orbit.

But there is a second telescope that could support these ideas, and there are assorted loose parts, including a primary mirror, for a third telescope, testimony to the NRO's lavish funding. Touring the ITT Exelis facility, Dressler was struck by the number of huge chambers designed to test space telescopes under vacuum. This was a place ready to stamp out Hubble-sized telescopes by the dozen, he says. "It makes you a little jealous," he says. "It's kind of neat and kind of sad." ■



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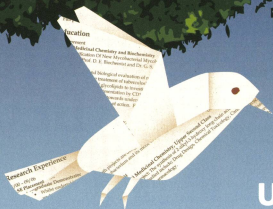
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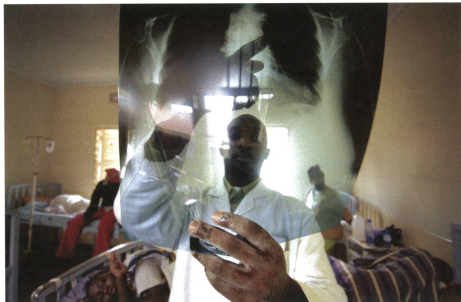
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Across Africa, the need for improved tuberculosis diagnosis and treatment is growing.

BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH

Foundation opens TB lab in Africa

Howard Hughes Medical Institute sets up shop at ground zero for tuberculosis: South Africa's KwaZulu-Natal.

BY LINDA NORDLING IN DURBAN

Patients huddle in dressing gowns outside the entrance to the King George V Hospital in Durban, South Africa. It is safer out here: fresh air limits the spread of disease. Inside, the sickest lie listless, too tired to get up, or perhaps beyond caring.

This threadbare hospital is on the front line in Durban's war against multidrug-resistant and extensively drug-resistant tuberculosis (TB). Its patients — most of whom also have HIV — undergo grueling courses of treatment that last for months or years. Those who get better may experience side effects such as hearing loss or psychosis. The unlucky ones die.

For William Bishai, these bleak circumstances offer a source of hope, through an unusual research collaboration. The microbiologist heads the KwaZulu-Natal Research Institute for Tuberculosis and HIV (K-RITH), which officially opens on 9 October in a new building on the campus of the Nelson R. Mandela School of Medicine at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) in Durban.

The province of KwaZulu-Natal has one of the highest rates of TB cases in the world: about

3,000 drug-resistant cases are diagnosed each year. Furthermore, 80% of people diagnosed with TB there also have HIV — making the province perhaps the best place in the world to study the lethal interplay between these diseases. The dire need, and the opportunity to develop new treatments and diagnostics, led the Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI) in Chevy Chase, Maryland — one of the richest biomedical research foundations in the world — to establish K-RITH as its first laboratory outside the United States. The HHMI will spend about US\$75 million on the institute over 10 years; the UKZN will contribute another \$10 million.

The seven-storey, \$40-million K-RITH building is close to Durban's main chest clinic, where 15,000 people are screened for TB, HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases every month. This is where people will be recruited to take part in research. "The samples are literally

just outside our door," says Bishai.

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Antibiotics that successfully treat TB have been around since the 1940s, but interrupted or

incomplete courses of treatment using first-line drugs such as isoniazid and rifampicin have led to an alarming worldwide increase in infections with resistant strains of TB (T. Dalton *et al. Lancet* <http://doi.org/h8r>; 2012). K-RITH will focus on developing better treatments and faster and more accurate diagnostic tests, not only to improve survival, but also to reduce the spread of the disease. In addition, the institute will study the relationship between TB and HIV, which Bishai says is poorly understood. "It is clear that TB makes HIV worse and HIV makes TB worse. But we don't understand the mechanism behind this," he says.

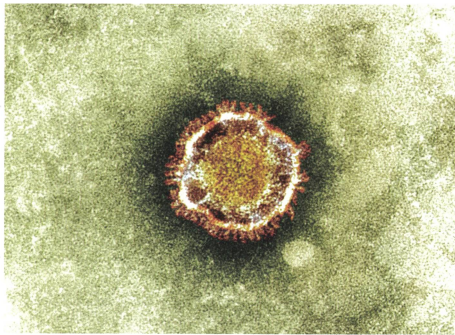
The institute is part of a growing trend in Africa to locate research on diseases close to the people who have them, says Bishai. Samples collected in Africa were once sent to the United States, Europe or Asia for study, but this often leaves local scientists and patients feeling exploited. Co-location of research and patients helps to build scientific capacity in the region, and encourage locals to participate in studies.

Eight investigators already work at K-RITH, and three are African. "We really beat the bushes to find African scientists," says Bishai, who moved from Maryland to Durban last year. Ugandan engineer Frederick Balagaddé will use microfluidic chips — chemistry sets the size of credit cards — to develop improved tests for HIV and TB. Adrie Steyn, a South African microbiologist, will study how *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*, the microbe that causes TB, fends off attacks by the immune system. And Thumbi Ndung'u, a Kenyan virologist, wants to find out why some people are less susceptible to HIV infection than others.

The other investigators are European or from the United States, but all had to agree to spend at least 80% of their time in Durban. One is a legend of TB research: Frenchman Jacques Grosset was diagnosed with TB at the age of 25, and after getting out of the sanatorium he took up the fight against the disease at the Pasteur Institute in Paris. Over the past 50 years he has had a hand in developing most of the drug regimens used to treat TB. Now, at the age of 83, Grosset has moved from Paris to Durban, expecting to finish his long and illustrious career using K-RITH's biocontainment laboratories to study drug-resistant TB in mice.

K-RITH's first clinical study is already under way, and aims to work out the optimum dose of TB drugs to use in children who have both TB and HIV. Another begins recruiting this month, as part of a global trial of a combination of drugs — PA-824, moxifloxacin and pyrazinamide — sponsored by the Global Alliance for TB Drug Development, a public-private partnership in New York (see *Nature* **487**, 413–414; 2012).

Having this kind of research activity on their doorstep is already raising the hopes of local clinicians, says Surie Chinappa, a doctor at the Durban chest clinic. "I think it will be positive for our patients." ■



The research legacy of the SARS virus (pictured) is helping scientists to move quickly against a new threat.

BIOLOGICAL RESEARCH

SARS veterans tackle coronavirus

Genome sequence of new virus speeds up testing.

BY DECLAN BUTLER

Scientists who helped to fight the 2003 epidemic of SARS (severe acute respiratory syndrome) have sprung into action again to investigate the latest threat: a new SARS-related virus that has killed one man and left another seriously ill. Last week, the researchers reported the genome sequence of the new coronavirus and the first diagnostic tests to screen for it — two major advances that will help in efforts to control the pathogen if it turns into a wider menace.

The SARS virus was identified in March 2003 as the cause of an epidemic that had emerged in China several months before, and which had spread rapidly around the world. It caused nearly 8,500 cases and 916 deaths before it was finally contained in July 2003. At the time, scientists knew almost nothing about the virus — coronaviruses had received scant attention until then because they had previously caused little more than colds.

The research and public-health networks established during the SARS epidemic — and the body of coronavirus research that followed — puts scientists today in a much stronger

position to understand the latest virus and to develop countermeasures such as drugs and vaccines, should they be required. “We are all collaborating again,” says Christian Drosten, director of the Institute of Virology at the University of Bonn Medical Centre in Germany, who has been involved in developing diagnostic tests for the pathogen. “This is the old SARS club.”

So far, there is little evidence that the virus poses any major public-health threat. No one who came into contact with the two cases has fallen ill, suggesting that the virus does not spread easily between humans. Nonetheless, health authorities worldwide are not being complacent — respiratory viruses can cause pandemics, and this strain has already caused serious disease. The key question now, and one that the diagnostics will help to answer, is whether the two cases are isolated events or whether the virus could strike again and perhaps adapt to spread more easily in humans.

The first case was a 60-year-old man admitted to the Dr Soliman Fakeeh Hospital in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, on 13 June with severe pneumonia and renal failure, who died on 24 June. Post-mortem tests were negative

for influenza and the other usual suspect viruses, so Ali Mohamed Zaki, a microbiologist at the hospital, ran a coronavirus test at the suggestion of Ron Fouchier, a virologist at Erasmus University Medical Centre in Rotterdam, the Netherlands, who had worked on the SARS virus.

On 20 September, Zaki posted his results on the Program for Monitoring Emerging Diseases (ProMED), an online disease-reporting system, confirming that the coronavirus tests were positive. A week later, Fouchier’s group, which had received an isolate of the virus from Zaki in early July, published the pathogen’s genome sequence in the GenBank database. The genome confirmed that the pathogen was a new coronavirus, the closest relatives of which are found in bats.

Two days after seeing Zaki’s ProMED post, the UK Health Protection Agency reported that it had found a second case: a 49-year-old man from Qatar who fell ill on 3 September with similar symptoms. He was admitted to intensive care in Doha on 7 September and then transferred to a London hospital, where he remains seriously ill. Comparing a fragment of the genome sequence of his virus with that of the first case showed that the two were identical. The viral genome sequence also enabled an international group of researchers, including Fouchier and Drosten, to quickly devise diagnostic tests that look for short, characteristic stretches of the virus’s RNA. The collaboration came easily, says Drosten: “The good thing here is that these are all friends from the SARS time.”

Existing SARS research provides a useful template for further investigation of this latest coronavirus, adds Drosten. Scientists will use animal models such as mice, ferrets and macaques to study the pathogen’s virulence and how it spreads, for example. They will also test whether antivirals and vaccines developed since SARS to treat other coronaviruses are effective.

A key experiment, he says, will be to find where the new virus latches on to the human lung. Some scientists suspect that it might bind to the angiotensin-converting enzyme 2 (ACE2) receptor, as did the SARS virus. That could be both good and bad news. The receptor is found deep in the lungs, where infections can cause severe disease, but viruses nestling there are less apt to be coughed or sneezed into the air than are those found higher in the lungs.

Receptor-binding properties could also be crucial to the success of potential control measures, should they be needed,” says Drosten. SARS was contained by isolating suspected cases, partly because it did not spread quickly, but also because those it infected became very ill before the virus moved into the upper respiratory system. That made cases easy to identify before the patients started spreading the virus. Flu pandemics, by contrast, are impossible to stop, largely because those infected with the virus spread it to others for days before they show any symptoms of infection. ■

PUBLISHING

Misconduct is the main cause of life-sciences retractions

Opaque announcements in journals can hide fraud, study finds.

BY ZOË CORBYN

Conventional wisdom says that most retractions of papers in scientific journals are triggered by unintentional errors. Not so, according to one of the largest-ever studies of retractions. A survey¹ published in *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* has found that two-thirds of retracted life-sciences papers were stricken from the scientific record because of misconduct such as fraud or suspected fraud — and that journals sometimes soft-pedal the reason.

The survey examined all 2,047 articles in the PubMed database that had been marked as retracted by 3 May this year. But rather than taking journals' retraction notices at face value, as previous analyses have done, the study used secondary sources to pin down the reasons for retraction if the notices were incomplete or vague. These sources included investigations by the US Office of Research Integrity, and evidence reported by the blog Retraction Watch.

The analysis revealed that fraud or suspected fraud was responsible for 43% of the retractions. Other types of misconduct — duplicate publication and plagiarism — accounted for 14% and 10% of retractions, respectively. Only 21% of the papers were retracted because of error (see 'Bad copy').

Earlier studies had found that the percentage of retractions attributable to error was 1.5–3 times higher^{2–4}. "The secondary sources give a very different picture," says Arturo Casadevall, a microbiologist at Yeshiva University in New York, and a co-author of the latest study. "Retraction notices are often not accurate."

Elizabeth Wager, a UK-based medical writer and co-author of a previous study³ that relied on journal retraction notices, isn't surprised by the finding of hidden misconduct. "We found many notices that seemed deliberately obscure or vague," she says, speculating that authors and journals may use opaque retraction notices to save face or avoid libel charges.

The latest study shows a ten-fold increase (to about 0.01%) in the proportion of papers retracted owing to fraud since 1975. Previous analyses have seen a growing trend in retractions in general⁵, but the latest report sheds new light on the extent to which fraud is responsible. It also found a correlation between journal impact factor and the number of fraud-induced retractions, says Ferric Fang, a

TOP TEN RETRACTORS

Journals with the most retractions attributable to fraud or suspected fraud, as recorded in PubMed.

Journal	Number of articles	2011 impact factor
<i>The Journal of Biological Chemistry</i>	37	5.12
<i>Anesthesia & Analgesia</i>	33	3.07
<i>Science</i>	32	32.45
<i>The Journal of Immunology</i>	30	5.86
<i>Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences</i>	27	10.47
<i>Blood</i>	21	9.79
<i>Nature</i>	19	36.24
<i>The Journal of Clinical Investigation</i>	17	15.43
<i>Cancer Research</i>	16	8.16
<i>Cell</i>	13	34.77

BAD COPY

Most retracted papers listed in PubMed were withdrawn owing to fraud or suspected fraud.

Fraud/suspected fraud	Duplication	Other
43.4%	14.2%	11.3%

TOTAL RETRACTED ARTICLES: 2,047

Error	Plagiarism
21.3%	9.6%

microbiologist at the University of Washington in Seattle, who led the study.

Influential journals, including *Science*, *Nature*, *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* and *Cell*, all appear in the top-ten list of publications with retractions because of fraud or suspected fraud (see "Top ten retractors"). For some journals, including the two topping the table — *The Journal of Biological Chemistry* and *Anesthesia & Analgesia* — the tally was boosted by multiple retractions from the same few individuals, such as anaesthesiologist Joachim Boldt, formerly of the Ludwigshafen Clinical Center in Germany.

Indeed, Fang and his colleagues found that 38 research groups with five or more retractions accounted for 44% of

articles linked to fraud or suspected fraud.

Whether the overall rise in fraud-induced retractions is the result of an increase in misconduct, or simply down to more scrutiny, is an open question, says Fang. It is also unclear whether the high-impact journals have more retractions for fraud because they are checked more closely, or because they are more likely to attract fraudsters. But Fang thinks that the large rewards for publishing in leading journals — which can range from winning grants to receiving tenure — are powerful incentives that could be driving some of the trend. "We need to look at how we have structured the system, so scientists are not given incentives to [commit fraud] quite as strongly," he says.

The survey found some significant geographical differences. Retracted papers with lead authors based in historical scientific superpowers, such as the United States and Germany, were more likely to be linked to fraud. In emerging scientific powers such as India and China, however, plagiarism and duplication caused more of the retractions. "These trends may reflect differences in incentives, cultural norms and proficiency in English among these countries," says Fang.

Ivan Oransky, a New York-based journalist and co-founder of Retraction Watch, suggests setting up a 'transparency index' for journals, to rank them on criteria such as the clarity of their retraction notices. The idea, which he says he would be keen to work on, could provide a much-needed incentive for journals to improve their performance in this area. Data from the current study could also serve as a basis for a retractions database to help scientists avoid wasting time trying to replicate or build on retracted work, he adds.

"I'm not necessarily opposed to the idea, but I have concerns about how such a database could be properly maintained and updated," says Fang. "Our study is merely a snapshot. Creating an accurate, centralized database that could be used as an ongoing resource would be a considerable undertaking." ■

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4. Nath, S. B., Marcus, S. C. & Druss, B. G. *Med. J. Aust.* **185**, 152–154 (2006).

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Nature's retractions
feature:
go.nature.com/cg44re



Before the fall: American chestnuts in the Great Smokey Mountains of North Carolina in 1910.

The chestnut resurrection

Once king of eastern forests, the American chestnut was wiped out by blight. Now it is poised to rise again.

BY HELEN THOMPSON

“**T**hey’re hard to breed and easy to kill,” says plant pathologist Fred Hebard as he attacks a 2-metre-tall chestnut tree in southwest Virginia. Hebard bores a hole in the bark and squeezes a mash of orange fungus into the wood. The tree is a hybrid of the Chinese and American chestnut species, and Hebard hopes that it has enough resistance genes to keep the fungus — called chestnut blight — at bay. If so, the hybrid could help to resurrect a long-gone icon.

Until a century ago, the American chestnut (*Castanea dentata*) was the cornerstone tree

species of eastern North America. With long, straight trunks and bushy crowns, it carpeted the forest floor each autumn with prickly brown nuts. But the arrival of chestnut blight (*Cryphonectria parasitica*) from Asia wiped out almost all the stately trees, leaving only a few, isolated stands. Since then, a faithful fan club of scientists and citizens has sought to tame the blight.

As chief scientist of the American Chestnut Foundation (ACF), a group of chestnut enthusiasts and scientists, Hebard has bred thousands of hybrids at the organization’s research farm in Meadowview, Virginia. He crosses descendants of the original American

chestnut with the much smaller Chinese variety (*Castanea mollissima*), which has some natural immunity to the Asian fungus. And after decades of work, he is within reach of his goal, a tall American tree with enough Chinese traits to keep it healthy.

Other researchers are trying to attack the blight with viruses or are creating trees that are genetically modified (GM) to resist the fungus, and could be the first GM forest trees released in the wild in the United States. Progress with all three approaches is raising hopes that chestnuts will soon start to flourish again in the forests of the American east. “We’re starting to pull the American chestnut tree back from the brink of extinction,” says Hebard.

The work is also offering lessons that could help to save other trees, such as elm and ash, which face similar threats in America and abroad.

FROM GIANTS TO STUMPS

Once known as the sequoia of the east, the American chestnut was one of the tallest trees in the forest, and dominated a range of 800,000 square kilometres, from Mississippi to Maine (see ‘Felled by a fungus’). It made up 25% of the forest, and its annual nut crop was a major source of food for both animals and humans. The decay-resistant wood was also used to make telephone poles, roofs, fence posts and parts of railway lines.

The first warning signs came in 1904, when rust-coloured cankers developed on chestnuts at the Bronx Zoo in New York. Zoo forester Hermann Merkel took a sample across the street to the New York Botanical Garden, where mycologist William Murrill soon identified the spores as chestnut blight. The blight probably hitched a ride on nursery imports of Japanese chestnuts beginning in 1876. Spreading through rain and air, fungal spores infected trees through bark wounds and breaks. Cankers developed, quickly encircling a branch or trunk and cutting off the supply of water and nutrients from the soil. Within 50 years, the blight had laid waste to nearly the entire population of some 4 billion trees.

Other hardwoods, mainly oak, eventually filled the void but they do not produce a consistent crop of nuts every year. “You had a really dominant species that the wildlife depended on which was then replaced with a species that then didn’t produce as much,” says Douglas Jacobs, a forest ecologist at Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana. Reports from the period suggest that squirrel populations initially collapsed, and that five moth species dependent on chestnuts went extinct (D. A. Orwig *J. Biogeogr.* 29, 1471–1474; 2002).

As the chestnut succumbed to the blight, scientists raced to find solutions. They started breeding hybrids of American and Asian chestnuts, which have evolved alongside the blight. But the attempts produced no trees that were sufficiently resistant yet still had enough

American traits to make them a popular replacement. Asian chestnuts are shorter and less sturdy than their American counterparts.

Over the years, chestnut lovers have tried a range of remedies, including fungicides, sulphur fumes and radiation. They even conducted religious ceremonies, assuming that the sins of the people had brought on the blight. But all these strategies failed.

RESTORATION CHESTNUT

In 1983, a group of plant scientists joined together to form the ACF with the goal of creating a resistant tree. The foundation has since grown to 6,000 volunteer members, ranging from retired physicists to farmers, and it maintains 486 regional breeding orchards and 120,000 experimental trees.

At Meadowview Research Farm, where Hebard is based, a refrigerator holds prized pollen from American chestnuts and between 600 and 700 strains of the fungus. The valley and hillsides are lined with rows of hybrid chestnuts as well as unadulterated American, Chinese and Japanese chestnuts (*Castanea crenata*). Some have plastic bags covering their flowers to prevent unwanted natural pollination from ruining the experiments. "It's a chastity belt for chestnuts," jokes Hebard. "You bag it if you want to know who the daddy is."

Nearby are rows of chestnuts that stand about a metre tall, the most promising hybrid yet to emerge from nearly 30 years of breeding experiments. This 'restoration chestnut' is 94% American and 6% Chinese and seems to show strong resistance to the blight. But the Virginia trees may not thrive in other locations, so the researchers are working to adapt the restoration chestnut to other climates. At the same time, they are breeding new hybrids at other experimental farms to preserve a healthy degree of genetic diversity.

More than 1,100 kilometres to the north, researchers are experimenting with chestnuts that contain genes thought to provide resistance, which were taken from Chinese chestnuts as well as plants such as wheat, peppers and grapes. At the State University of New York in Syracuse, plant pathologist Bill Powell and forest biologist

Chuck Maynard have planted some 600 transgenic trees for field trials of disease resistance. A transgenic variety with a wheat gene for the enzyme oxalate oxidase, which disarms the fungus, has already shown resistance in the field.

Maynard, Powell and their colleagues are collaborating with a non-profit organization called the Forest Health Initiative in Research Triangle Park, North Carolina, to develop a GM version of an American chestnut with strong resistance based on genes from Asian

"We're starting to pull the American chestnut back from the brink of extinction."

chestnuts. Because such 'cisgenic' trees contain only chestnut genes, researchers hope that the trees won't provoke strong public objection. The Forest Health Initiative is testing the cisgenic chestnuts now and aims to obtain federal approval to conduct larger plantings. "Chestnut may be the first case of a genetically engineered tree that's planted out. If that happens it can probably pave the way for other trees," says Jacobs. Along the way, the transgenic work will help researchers to determine which resistance genes are the most useful.

Other researchers are enlisting viruses that attack the chestnut fungus. Such viruses spread most easily among closely related fungi and are effective at controlling the blight in Europe. But American fungal strains are more diverse, so the virus cannot spread as effectively. To get around that problem, virologist Don Nuss at the University of Maryland in College Park has developed a transgenic fungus that is designed to spread the virus more easily. Other researchers are conducting field trials to test whether the engineered fungus can compete with — and replace — wild-type fungal strains. If so, the viruses could be used in targeted ways to protect American chestnuts.

Most researchers agree that restoring the American chestnut will require a combination of fungal viruses and resistant trees, whether hybrid, GM or a mixture of both. And the trees will need to defend themselves against more than just the blight. Researchers are

also concerned about the threat of diseases already attacking other trees, such as root rot mould (*Phytophthora cinnamomi*) and invasive insects, including ambrosia beetles and gall wasps. Hybridization and transgenic programmes are beginning to target some of these threats.

Lessons learned from the battle to restore the chestnut could help save other threatened trees. The American elm (*Ulmus americana*) and its European counterpart (*Ulmus laevis*)

have been hit hard by Dutch elm disease, and ash and hemlock are succumbing to invasive insects. In the United Kingdom, the beloved horse chestnut (*Aesculus hippocastanum*) is in danger of being wiped out by a combination of a bacterium and a moth. Researchers are developing hybrid and transgenic programmes to defend against many of those threats.

NEVER-ENDING BATTLE

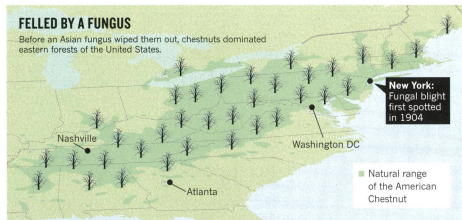
"It's the pest of the month club. We've lost chestnut and lost elm. Now, it's almost a new species or pest is being identified and a new tree or forest is being threatened almost on a monthly basis," says Carlton Owen, a forester and wildlife biologist who chairs the Forest Health Initiative's governing board. Owen says that the results of the chestnut work will help researchers to protect other species by showing which strategies work best in different situations and by testing public acceptance of GM trees.

Once researchers have a resistant chestnut, the question is where to plant it. Forest ecosystems have transformed in the past century, and reintroducing the chestnut could upset the new ecological balance. "You can't assume that a forest with chestnut is better than a forest without. You can't roll the clock back," says Steve Hamburg, chief scientist at the Environmental Defense Fund in Boston.

"Reintroduction is going to be kind of a gradual thing," says Jacobs. In 2009, the ACF began planting restoration chestnuts on US Forest Service land in Virginia, Tennessee and North Carolina. In April 2012, it also started planting hybrid chestnuts and other hardwood saplings at a former mining site.

For chestnut lovers, other signs of hope stand alongside a path at the New York Botanical Garden. In a corner of the garden, a transgenic chestnut and a restoration hybrid both reach about a metre high. Although their leaves have shrivelled a bit, the scrappy saplings have managed to survive one of the warmest summers on record. And their bark is smooth, with no sign of the cankers that claimed their ancestors. ■

Helen Thompson recently completed an internship at Nature in Washington DC.



THE NEW MILKY WAY

A FRESH LOOK AT OUR GALAXY
POINTS TO A CHAOTIC PAST
AND A VIOLENT END.

BY ANN FINKBEINER

Arcing across the night sky is a pale band of light the Romans called the *via lactea* — the Milky Way. Astronomers have known since the 1920s that this band is an edge-on view of the Galaxy in which we live: a vast pinwheel teeming with nebulae, gas clouds and billions upon billions of stars. For most of the nine decades since, astronomers also thought that our Galaxy and others like it were rather quiet places: ponderous, slowly rotating structures that formed many eons ago and had settled into uneventful middle age.

But then they began to see the Milky Way with fresh eyes (see 'Galactic portrait'). Starting in the 1970s and 1980s, new generations of ground- and space-based telescopes began mapping the Milky Way at wavelengths ranging from microwaves to X-rays, revealing an unimagined richness. By the 2000s, systematic observing programmes were tracing galactic structures that sprawl across most of the heavens, and are so big that no one had noticed them before. By the present decade, teams of astronomers were racing to build ever-more powerful computer simulations to model the origins of galaxies on every scale from cosmos to star clusters. And by next year, the Atacama Large Millimeter/Submillimeter Array (ALMA) in Chile will be mapping the Galaxy at unprecedented levels of detail.

Astronomers are still struggling to assimilate all this new information. Disagreements, uncertainties and unanswered questions abound.

But no one today would argue that our cosmic home town is a quiet backwater. The emerging picture of the Milky Way reveals that the Galaxy was born in chaos and shaped by violence, that it lives in a state of turbulent complexity, and that its future holds certain catastrophe.

THE DARK-MATTER HALO Astronomers are still arguing about the precise sequence of events during the Milky Way's birth, but everyone agrees that the story began with dark matter. The stuff is everywhere, even though it is

CENTRAL
BLACK
HOLE

GALACTIC
BULGE

THE SUN

GALACTIC PORTRAIT

This artist's impression, based on the latest data from telescopes and simulations, shows the Milky Way viewed from outside the Galaxy.

MOLECULAR CLOUDS

SPIRAL ARMS

STAR-FORMING REGIONS

invisible and no one yet knows what it is. It outweighs ordinary matter — stars, gas and everything else made of atoms — by a factor of about five, and yet can be detected only through its gravitational pull on visible stars and galaxies. Astronomers have known since the 1970s that the Milky Way, like every other galaxy, is wrapped in a vast cocoon of dark matter; without it, the gravity generated by ordinary matter would be nowhere near enough to hold the Galaxy together.

In the immediate aftermath of the Big Bang, some 13.7 billion years ago, gravity caused tiny irregularities in the dark matter to grow, forming denser and denser clumps on every size scale. Simulations show that this clumping process invariably becomes a chaos of collisions and mergers. But within a billion years of the Big Bang things settle down slightly, and some of the dark-matter clumps begin to look much like the one that surrounds the Milky Way: a roughly spherical halo several hundred kiloparsecs (1 kiloparsec is about 3,200 light-years) across, with a mass of about 10^{12} times that of the Sun, and a multitude of subhalos all the way down to the mass of Earth.

Inside this halo was a thin haze of primordial hydrogen and helium gas that got pulled along by the dark matter's gravity. After a few hundred million years, as this gas cooled and condensed enough to start forming stars, it would become the raw material from which our Galaxy was created. But modelling that process is anything but simple. "Dark matter answers only to gravity and we understand gravity," says Piero Madau, an astronomer at the University of California, Santa Cruz. But marshalling ordinary matter into today's galactic structure involved collisions, dissipations, cooling, heating and explosions. "It's very complicated," says Madau.

DWARF GALAXIES One complication involves those dark-matter subhalos. Above a certain mass, yet to be determined, they would have pulled in enough gas to form stars and become dwarf galaxies — irregular aggregations of stars and gas with roughly 1% the mass of the modern Milky Way. But if that were the case, the Milky Way ought to have thousands of dwarf galaxies in orbit around it. So far, observers have found some two dozen.

One possible explanation for this discrepancy is that there are many more dwarf galaxies, but they are vanishingly faint because they contain unusually high amounts of dark matter. The dwarf galaxy Segue 1, for example, has a thousand times more dark than shining matter.

"We are very, very interested in finding those vanishingly faint ones," says Connie Rockosi, an astronomer at the University of California, Santa Cruz, "because they tell us the threshold mass below which dark-matter subhalos don't form stars and host galaxies at all." Another possibility is that some subhalos are too small to have ever formed stars, and so are completely

dark. Finding such a galaxy-less clump of dark matter means looking for its gravitational effect on nearby dwarf galaxies or on streams of stars, and the signatures of such effects haven't yet been convincingly seen. "We'd love to find a dark-matter subhalo without a galaxy in it," says Rockosi. "That's high up on the list of things I hope I see."

Still another possibility is that many more dwarf galaxies did form, but the first generation of stars were all so massive, hot and explosive that they blasted all the gas and stars out of all but the largest subhalos.

THE STELLAR HALO Either way, creation of the Galaxy continued apace, with gas and dwarf galaxies swirling inwards towards an ever-increasing mass of gas and stars accumulating at the dark-matter halo's centre: the proto-Milky Way. The dwarf galaxies were "whizzing all over the place", says Heather Morrison, an astronomer at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio. "Things were just a mess." Inevitably, some of them would have got too close to the ever-growing core and been pulled apart by its gravity.

The region just outside today's Milky Way seems to be laced with remnants of such events: distinct streams of stars that loop around the galaxy along the dwarf galaxy's original orbit. These streams are tricky to identify, because they are faint and extend across much of the sky. But teams of observers are finding more and more of them. In at least one case, that of the Sagittarius dwarf galaxy and its associated star stream, observers have found a dwarf galaxy in the act of disintegrating.

These streams thread through a faint, diffuse halo of stars that extends outwards from the Milky Way perhaps 100 kiloparsecs in every direction, forming a rough sphere with a total mass of about 10^9 times that of the Sun (see "The big picture"). This stellar halo may be nothing more than the remnant of all the dwarf galaxies that got disrupted over billions of years. But the story may be a little more complicated than that.

In 2007, a team led by Daniela Carollo, now at Macquarie University in Sydney, Australia, and Timothy Beers, now director of the Kitt Peak National Observatory in Tucson, Arizona, confirmed earlier hints that the stellar halo is divided into inner and outer components. Stars in the outer halo generally have spectra showing only trace amounts of heavy elements such as iron. This suggests that these stars are, only one generation removed from the very first stars to form in the Universe, less than a billion years after the Big Bang. If nothing else, this means that the precise distribution of heavy elements in the outer halo should give astronomers a record of what those long-vanished first stars were like.

The stars in the inner halo contain higher amounts of heavy elements, and are somewhat younger — only about 11.4 billion years

THE BIG PICTURE

Recent data are illuminating the Milky Way's structure, including its bright disk and the fainter features surrounding it.

URSA MAJOR II
Dwarf galaxy.

SEGUE 1
Dwarf galaxy.

DISK
This most photogenic part of the Galaxy contains the spiral arms, is 30–40 kiloparsecs across and about 5×10^{10} solar masses.

THE SUN

STELLAR HALO

The Galaxy's sparse, faint halo of stars is roughly spherical, some 200 kiloparsecs across and only about 10^9 solar masses. Stars in the outer halo are very old; those in the inner halo are slightly younger.

SAGITTARIUS STAR STREAM

The Sagittarius dwarf galaxy is being pulled apart by the Milky Way's gravity, with its stars strung out along its orbit. Many other streams from long-dead dwarfs loop through the outer halo.

BUBBLES

Back-to-back jets of energy erupted from the Galaxy's central black hole some 10 million years ago, forming two bubbles of hot gas that extend about 7,600 parsecs above and below the galactic plane.

DWARF GALAXIES

The Large and Small Magellanic Clouds are the biggest known dwarf galaxies, which probably formed in the denser clumps of the dark-matter halo. About two dozen are known, including Segue 1, Ursa Major II and the Sagittarius dwarf.

old, according to work³ by Jason Kalirai of the Space Telescope Science Institute in Baltimore, Maryland. In addition, the average motion of the outer halo stars is opposite to that of the Galaxy, whereas the inner halo rotates in the same direction⁴.

THE DISK This pattern suggests that the outer halo formed from disrupted dwarf galaxies and the inner halo is a remnant of the maelstrom at the centre, where the proto-Milky Way was collapsing into its modern pinwheel form. The dynamics of this collapse have been understood for decades: every collision among the incoming gas and dwarf galaxies dissipated some of their orbital energy, so that they fell farther inwards. As they approached the centre, what started out as a small, random amount of rotation became magnified. And as the contracting mass spun faster and faster, it steadily

flattened into a thin disk. Within the disk, meanwhile, gravitational interactions caused the orbits of the stars and gas clouds to start piling up and causing celestial traffic jams: coiling 'density waves' that formed the spiral arms. (In some galaxies, spiral arms also seem to be the result of shock waves propagating through interstellar gas.)

The uncertainties arise when it comes to the details. Did it take a billion years for the disk to form? Ten billion years? "Nobody really knows," says James Bullock, an astronomer at the University of California, Irvine.

And how is it that the Milky Way can keep on making stars, when it probably should have run out of raw material billions of years ago? To do that, the Galaxy has to maintain itself as a complex ecosystem in which matter cycles back and forth between stars and interstellar gas. Much of that gas is quite sparse, perhaps a few

DARK-MATTER HALO

The Galaxy's largest component is roughly spherical, several hundred kiloparsecs across, about 10^{12} times the mass of the Sun — and completely invisible.

hundred atoms per cubic metre, and, thanks to ultraviolet light from stars, it drifts through the disk in a hot, ionized form. But in the 1970s, astronomers discovered that sometimes, for reasons that still aren't completely clear, the gas can gather itself into clouds so dense that their interiors are shielded from starlight. The gas on the inside can get as cold as 10–30 K, allowing atoms in the gas to form molecules such as molecular hydrogen and carbon monoxide; thus the name 'molecular clouds'. But because of gravity, this density also brings instability. No sooner do the molecular clouds form than their thickest clumps collapse, heating up and igniting by thermonuclear fusion to become stars.

These star-forming regions of the clouds, often called the Galaxy's stellar nurseries, are tumultuous: newborn stars eject matter in the form of fierce stellar winds, along with floods of ultraviolet radiation. The most massive of them also quickly die in supernova explosions; others end their lives by expanding into red giants and shedding their outer layers. All of these processes blast gas back into the wider galaxy, where it will eventually cool, condense and start the cycle again.

The problem is that the Milky Way turns gas into stars at the rate of a few solar masses every year, a pace that by now should have used up all the available gas. But the Galaxy has been forming stars for at least the past 10 billion years. "It's got to get gas from somewhere," says Ken Freeman of the Australian National University in Canberra.

That somewhere may be an outside reservoir: a halo of gas that's been observed in X-ray and extreme-ultraviolet wavelengths surrounding the Milky Way's stellar halo¹⁷. Such reservoirs of gas have also been seen around other galaxies¹⁸. It is mostly ionized hydrogen at maybe 1,000,000 K, and extends a few hundred kiloparsecs from the centre. It is low density, around a hundred hydrogen atoms per cubic metre, but so large that its mass should be at least that of all the stars in the Galaxy — "a terrific reservoir", Freeman says, "and just a little of it coming in would kick off star formation" for billions of years.

If halo gas does cool and condense enough to fall into the Galaxy — "like dew settling out of a fog", says David Weinberg of Ohio State University in Columbus — it may give rise to what observers see as high-velocity clouds¹⁹, falling towards the disk. These clouds, in turn, may be related to the 'fountains' that result when stars explode into supernovae and kick gas 10–100 kiloparsecs out of the disk²⁰. The theory is that the fountains soar up into the gas halo, pick up some of the ionized gas, and fall back towards

the disk as high-velocity clouds. "We see stuff going out and stuff coming in," says Weinberg, "but we don't know if they're the same things."

THE BULGE AND BAR At the Galaxy's centre, roughly 8 kiloparsecs from Earth, is the bulge: a collection of mostly elderly stars, around 10 billion years old, arranged in a sphere holding around 10^{10} solar masses. Bisecting the bulge is a roughly linear 'bar' of younger stars some 2–4 kiloparsecs long. Its origins are a matter of debate, but similar features are commonly seen in other 'barred' spiral galaxies.

And at the heart of the bulge is an enormous black hole, which sits at the precise centre of the Galaxy. At 4 million solar masses, our local black hole is on the small side as such objects

"IN THE UNIVERSE, STAR FORMATION IS GRADUALLY SHUTTING DOWN AND THE DEAD ARE BUILDING UP."

go: most galaxies seem to have one, and they often reach billions of solar masses. Ours also happens to be inactive at present — that is, nothing is falling into it.

It was once livelier. In 2010, Douglas Finkbeiner (no relation to this writer) at the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics in Cambridge, Massachusetts, found two bubbles on either side of the bulge and perpendicular to the disk²¹. The bubbles were each 7,600 parsecs long and outlined by X-ray emissions; shooting into them from the galactic centre were small, faint y-ray jets. Both bubbles and jets are signatures of an active black hole, formed when matter falling into the black hole sends out jets of energy and creates shockwaves in the surrounding gas. Active black holes in the centres of galaxies are fairly common and are probably a stage through which all galaxies pass. Finkbeiner estimates that the Milky Way's black hole was active somewhere around 10 million years ago, and probably at intervals before that too. "The black hole didn't get to be 4 million solar masses if nothing fell into it," he says.

THE FUTURE Observers have known for decades that the nearest large galaxy, the spiral M31 in the constellation Andromeda, is heading towards the Milky Way. But they didn't know whether a collision was inevitable because they hadn't been able to measure its movement sideways across the sky — a quantity known as 'proper motion'. In May, Roland van der Marel at the Space Telescope Science Institute and his colleagues compared Andromeda's position over time with background galaxies, and measured its proper motion to an accuracy of 11 microarcseconds per year^{22–24} — roughly equivalent to watching human fingernails grow

from the distance of the Moon. They found that Andromeda and the Milky Way — now about 770 kiloparsecs apart and moving towards each other at 109 kilometres per second — will collide head on in about 6 billion years. They will then pass through each other and mutually orbit until, at 7 billion years, the two spiral galaxies will merge to form one elliptical galaxy.

Ellipticals are one of the two main shapes of galaxy. In contrast to the lively spiral galaxies, which tend to be actively forming stars, the ellipticals are more like featureless blobs containing little gas and few new stars. Oddly, only a minority of galaxies seem to be in transition; on the whole they're either lively or quiescent. Theorists' best explanation for this is that the merger between two big galaxies leads to a burst of star

formation, which quickly uses up the available gas. Or maybe the merger reactivates the black holes in the galaxies' centres, and the resulting high-energy shocks and jets either drive the gas out of the galaxies or keep the gas stirred up and so hot that it can't form stars. One way or another, says Tim Heckman of Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland, "infalling gas is cut off and the galaxy uses up the gas it's got".

The Universe holds only so much gas, and sooner or later — maybe as long again as galaxies have already existed — galaxies will have converted all their gas into stars. In the Universe, "star formation is gradually shutting down", says Heckman, "and the dead are building up". Little stars; one-tenth of a solar mass, can live quietly for a trillion years. But even they will eventually burn out — and that will be it. The end. ■

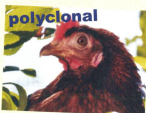
Ann Finkbeiner is a freelance writer in Baltimore, Maryland.

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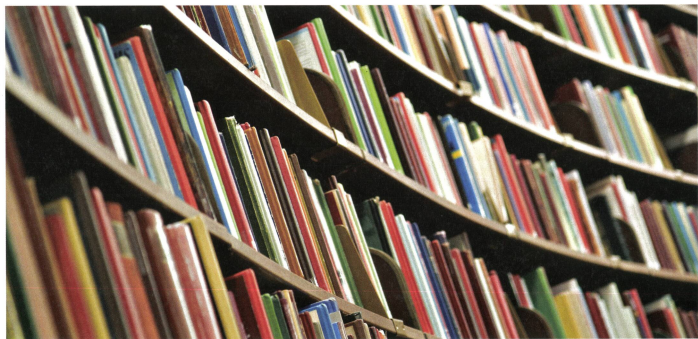
COMMENT

HISTORY What do some of the great laboratories of history have in common? **p.31**

DISEASE On the trail of the next human pandemics lurking in animals **p.33**

EXPEDITIONS Among the people behind the Mars rovers **p.34**

PUBLISHING Reviews turn inchoate literature into knowledge **p.37**



Don't let copyright block data mining

Matthew L. Jockers, Matthew Sag and Jason Schultz explain why humanities scholars have pitched in to the *Authors Guild v. Google* lawsuit.

Advances in computer technology combined with the availability of digital archives are allowing humanities scholars to do what biologists, physicists and economists have been doing for decades — analyse massive amounts of data. A far richer understanding of literature promises to emerge. For instance, large-scale quantitative projects are forcing scholars to reconsider how literary canons are formed and are showing the extent to which authors' works are shaped by factors outside their own creative control, such as the period in which they lived, their gender and their nationality.

Yet in the United States, legal action pursued by the Authors Guild, an advocacy group for writers, could bar scholars from

studying as much as two-thirds of the literary record. A small group of humanities scholars (ourselves included) is fighting back.

CASE HISTORY

In 2004, Google began scanning and digitizing books held in prominent US academic libraries such as those at Stanford University in California and the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, to make these collections fully searchable. Currently, more than 20 million books, most of which are out of print, can be searched at Google Books (books.google.com). Unless a book's copyright protection has expired, or the copyright owner has agreed to make the content freely available, the search engine

displays just three-line 'snippets' from each book — enough to tell the searcher that the listed item is indeed what they are looking for. With the right tools, however, data from the full text can, in principle, be mined and used in large-scale analyses.

In 2005, the Authors Guild, based in New York, with some 8,500 members including published authors, literary agents and lawyers, filed a class-action lawsuit claiming that Google's scanning activity was a "massive copyright infringement". Google, the Authors Guild and a group of publishers agreed to a class-action settlement in 2008. This gave Google permission to continue scanning and to sell electronic books individually or as part of a subscription service. In return, ▶

► Google agreed to share the advertising revenue from Google Books with authors and publishers, and to make one-off payments to copyright owners amounting to a minimum of US\$125 million.

The settlement was strongly opposed by foreign governments, the US Department of Justice, the US Copyright Office, authors, academics and rival technology companies for various reasons. Many feared that it would create an unfair monopoly, with Google having the sole right to publish millions of 'orphan' works — books whose copyright owners cannot easily be located. In 2009, the settlement was revised to try to address these concerns. But the court rejected the revised settlement in 2011, and the legal controversy continues.

In September last year, in a separate case, the Authors Guild sued several universities for participating in Google's book-scanning project. As part of this case, known as *Authors Guild v. HathiTrust*, it is also pursuing legal action against the HathiTrust Digital Library, a service that enables a large consortium of universities and research libraries to store, secure and search their digital collections using a shared infrastructure.

Among the issues at the heart of this dispute is what researchers in the emerging field of digital humanities will be allowed to analyse: only public-domain books (mostly those published before 1923 in the United States), or all known literary works. The answer may define the future of the field.

TO THE BARRICADES

On 3 August, the Association for Computers and the Humanities and a group of 64 scholars (that includes us), from disciplines ranging from law and computer science to linguistics, history and literature, filed an

amicus curiae brief on behalf of the digital humanities. We are urging the court in *Authors Guild v. Google* to grant a summary judgment in favour of Google, a step that will effectively end the litigation¹. We filed a similar brief in the HathiTrust case on 7 July. The judge in the HathiTrust case is currently considering our submission, and a decision is expected imminently. The court in *Authors Guild v. Google* will consider our argument as soon as the appeals court deals with certain procedural issues.

We feel that if the Authors Guild wins the cases against Google and the HathiTrust, the ruling could set a dangerous precedent — that copyright gives authors and publishers the right to control all, even 'non-expressive' uses of their works that involve copying. Copyright law has long recognized the distinction between protecting an author's original expression and the public's right to access the facts and ideas contained within that expression. According to the US Constitution, the purpose of copyright is "To promote the Progress of Science and useful Arts". Preventing authors from monopolizing facts and ideas allows others to explore their own creativity and 'stand on the shoulders of giants'.

We believe that copyright law is not (and should not be) an obstacle to statistical and computational analysis of the millions of books owned by university libraries. We are not talking about republishing them or even quoting from them. We simply want to extract information from and about them to sift out trends and patterns.

As an example, clustering more than 3,000 nineteenth-century novels according to how much they share certain stylistic properties (specific words and punctuation marks) and thematic features (such as groups of commonly

co-occurring words) has thrown up findings that would be hard to glean from reading a handful of books individually. One is that books authored by men tend to cluster quite distinctly from books authored by women (see 'Knowing your subject'). This illustrates the degree to which gender determines the choices made by writers, but also flags up outliers. For instance, within this clustering, the works of George Eliot (real name Mary Anne Evans) sit firmly among those of male writers. In other words, such 'macroanalytic' methodology gives researchers a way to see individual authors and publications within the context of a much larger system.

Authors' rights deserve protection. And governments and the various stakeholders involved may eventually work out how to achieve the full potential of digital libraries in a way that is fair to writers, readers and providers. But digitizing books for 'non-expressive' uses, such as basic searching and text mining, is a separate issue and should not be barred on the basis of concerns over copyright. An independent review last year of intellectual property and growth commissioned by the British government came to a similar conclusion². Unauthorized music-file sharing can infringe copyright because humans ultimately experience those files as musical works. Scanning words from library books to make a search index, or to compile a list of word frequencies, does not interfere with the rights of the author. These uses simply convert masses of text into metadata.

It is time for the US courts to recognize explicitly that, in the digital age, copying books for non-expressive purposes is not infringement. Courts have already applied this logic in analogous cases: Google, Microsoft and others copy web pages to feed into their Internet search engines; the online service Turnitin copies exam papers and other sources so that plagiarism can be detected. These practices have been challenged and found to be legal under copyright law.

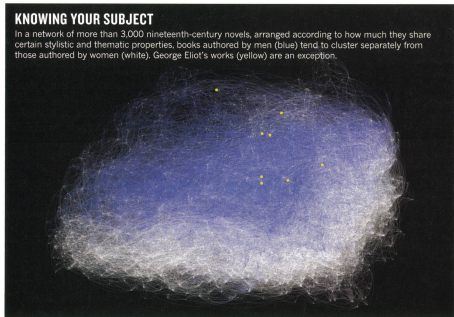
It is crucial for future research that the right precedent be set. We hope that the judges decide that digitization for text mining and other forms of computational analysis is, unequivocally, fair use. ■

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KNOWING YOUR SUBJECT

In a network of more than 3,000 nineteenth-century novels, arranged according to how much they share certain stylistic and thematic properties, books authored by men (blue) tend to cluster separately from those authored by women (white). George Eliot's works (yellow) are an exception.





Max Perutz, James Watson, John Kendrew and Francis Crick talk to a BBC presenter (centre) about their Nobel prizes in 1962.

What makes a great lab?

William Bynum reflects on the factors that have brought nine Nobel prizes to the UK Laboratory of Molecular Biology in Cambridge.

What makes an outstanding laboratory? There have been a number of these special places during the past couple of centuries, but none more so than the Laboratory of Molecular Biology (LMB) in Cambridge, UK, which is celebrating 50 years since it got its own building and, this week, 50 years since four of its scientists were awarded Nobel prizes — Max Perutz, John Kendrew, James Watson and Francis Crick.

Overall, the LMB can claim nine Nobel prizes for 13 staff scientists during its illustrious history, plus another eight for those who trained or worked there temporarily. As a unit within the Cavendish Laboratory at the University of Cambridge, the LMB had a distinguished pre-history. Few would have dared to predict that its independent existence would be so successful and productive. Seen historically, however, it shares characteristics with other outstanding laboratories. These include new methods of producing scientific knowledge, novel approaches to

training researchers, the innovation and excitement that surround an emerging scientific field and, perhaps most centrally, the presence of a gifted individual with the personality and vision to make things happen.

The LMB can thus be seen as a modern exemplar of a species that goes back to the early nineteenth century. Previous centres of excellence had differing ambiances, which reflected the scientific cultures of their times. But all share a few important star qualities. In search of these, here I briefly examine three of the LMB's ancestors and its parent laboratory.

LABORATORY LIFE

Before the nineteenth century, most laboratories were places in which single individuals worked, sometimes aided by an assistant or two. Chemist Antoine Lavoisier (1743–94), with his wife at his side, was typical. Wives and servants often helped. Justus von Liebig (1803–73) changed this pattern definitively.

Liebig's chemistry laboratory at the University of Giessen in Germany opened in

1826 and acquired international renown. It attracted students from all over Europe and earned Liebig a reputation as a 'chemist breeder'. His lab was an early example of the research and teaching establishments that made the German universities the envy of many. It began as a single room, with a fire in the middle surrounded by work benches. Liebig's work on the compositions of chemical substances and their reactions was outstanding, and his focus on agricultural, industrial and biological issues gave his research a highly topical flavour.

He trained his protégés carefully, especially in qualitative analysis. Students flocked to him, with the result that European chemistry during the middle of the nineteenth century bore a distinctly Liebigian flavour as his students moved to influential positions elsewhere. The identification of state-of-the-art problems and the training of students to solve them characterize his achievements. Liebig's initiative was widely adapted in the natural and biomedical sciences throughout the German university system.

Training was also part of the brief of physiologist Ivan Pavlov (1849–1936), but he brought his own organizational genius to bear on the 'physiology factory' that he masterminded in St Petersburg, Russia, famously studying dogs. He adapted aspects of manufacturing to the production of scientific knowledge. Pavlov's staff were among the first to specialize in different tasks: surgical, chemical, dog handling. The dogs were also specialized. Many had permanent gastric fistulas; some had oesophageal or pancreatic ones or other surgical interventions that allowed Pavlov to examine physiology *in situ*.

Pavlov's 'laboratory' eventually occupied a whole building — already nearer to the modern usage of the word, and a far cry from the single rooms of most researchers of earlier times. As science has become more complex and cooperative, so the physical structures of laboratories have evolved faster than the language we use to describe them.

The next example reinforces this point: Thomas Hunt Morgan (1866–1945) and his Fly Room at Columbia University in New York. It was more than just a room. Modern experimental genetics was born there, with the fruitfly (*Drosophila melanogaster*) as the prize experimental subject. The fly's rapid breeding time and four large chromosomes made it ideal for examining how chromosomal events during meiosis and mitosis relate to the structural features of the adult. A chance finding of a fly with a white eye — instead of the usual red — led Morgan to the importance of the sex chromosome.

Morgan was a gifted scientist who surrounded himself with equally gifted students and postdoctoral researchers, including Alfred Sturtevant, Calvin Bridges and Hermann J. Muller. Although Morgan was a

patrician from the US South, he ran his lab on egalitarian lines, with the consequence that historians still debate the relative contributions of the different parties. Morgan won a Nobel prize by himself in 1933, although he divided the money with Sturtevant and Bridges, to help to educate their children. Only Muller (who won his own Nobel in 1946 for his work on the effects of radiation on mutation rates) suggested seriously that Morgan sometimes exploited his students. Most believed that in the free interchange and mutual devotion to uncovering the genetics of fruit the fruitfly was a formula that worked.

Liebig, Pavlov and Morgan each created something special. Their labs achieved international prominence, attracted talented scientists and bred further success. Each lab bore the stamp of the founder's ambitions and personality, and this relationship between the boss and the establishment stands out. Morgan's culture of egalitarianism provided a model for many successful modern laboratories, not least the LMB.

LAB SPECIATION

A kind of speciation can sometimes occur with laboratories. What is now the LMB began life ensconced in the Cavendish Laboratory, the centre of physics at the University of Cambridge and, by any reckoning, also among the most successful modern labs.

The Cavendish opened in 1874. Its first director, James Clerk Maxwell (1831–79), was arguably the most important physicist between Newton and Einstein. A genial man blessed with a fertile mind and remarkable ingenuity, Maxwell contributed to many problems in physics, and he completed the work on electromagnetism begun by Hans Christian Ørsted, Michael Faraday and others. He showed that the Sun's light comes to us through electromagnetic waves, and at the same time predicted the range of radiations that has been central to modern science and modern life.

Many of these advancements came from the Cavendish, beginning with J. J. Thomson (1856–1940) and his discovery of the electron in 1897. His was one of many Nobel prizes from the Cavendish, and like all leaders of successful laboratories, he was a good talent spotter. And successful labs attract ambitious and talented individuals. Ernest Rutherford (1871–1937) came from New Zealand to the Cavendish because of Thomson and his group. He thrived there, and after stints in Montreal, Canada, and Manchester, UK, he succeeded Thomson as director in 1919. He brought with him from Manchester James Chadwick, rooting nuclear and atomic physics firmly in the Cavendish during the early decades of the twentieth century.

Until it got its own building in 1962, the LMB was simply a research unit within the Cavendish. Of its early workers, the most

important was Max Perutz (1914–2002), whose style and personality shaped the LMB. Perutz came to England in 1936, hoping to work with Frederick Gowland Hopkins, the pioneer Cambridge biochemist. A meeting with the X-ray crystallographer J. D. Bernal, then still at the Cavendish, convinced the young Perutz that X-rays could provide the tools to solve the molecular structures of proteins. It took Perutz a further year to get horse haemoglobin crystals that were suitable for analysis using X-ray diffraction techniques. Because of the Second World War, it was seven more years before he could return to this molecule, his life's work. Even though he had lived in England for several years before the outbreak of war, he was treated as an enemy alien and incarcerated for nine months during 1940, in Britain and Canada. He spent the rest of the war back in Britain designing aircraft carriers.

Encouraged by Lawrence Bragg, then director of the Cavendish, Perutz returned to studying haemoglobin, joined by John Kendrew (1917–97). The beginnings of the LMB date from 1947, when the UK Medical Research Council (MRC) began supporting the work of Perutz and Kendrew. The original name of their group was the MRC Unit for Research on the Molecular Structure of Biological Systems. Perutz described himself then as a chemist working in a physics laboratory on a biological problem: a fairly accurate summary of the inputs into the field dubbed 'molecular biology' in 1938 by the Rockefeller Foundation administrator Warren Weaver.

Perutz and Kendrew pursued a promising avenue of molecular biological research, but haemoglobin is such a complex model that they soon added the simpler myoglobin to their agenda. Hugh Huxley joined

"A single administrator, Audrey Martin (and her dog Slippers), looked after things."

the group in 1948, but turned to studying the biophysical dynamics of muscle contraction: an early example of the widening range of biological problems in the unit's remit. The increasing international reputation of the group's work brought talented young scientists to Cambridge, including physicist Francis Crick as a research student and biologist James Watson as a postdoc.

A successful laboratory generally breeds more success, with implications for size and ethos. Bragg was appreciative of the group's prominence, but the Cavendish was chronically short of space in post-war austerity Britain. So in 1957 Perutz, aware that Frederick Sanger from the biochemistry department also needed more space, wrote to the MRC about housing the molecular biologists in a new laboratory. Unsurprisingly, negotiations were slow given so many vested interests, but

money was found. The present building, in Hills Road, Cambridge, expanded on more than one occasion and, still growing, was opened by Queen Elizabeth II in May 1962. There were then about 25 staff members and the same number of visiting workers. In October, there was a party to celebrate the Nobel prizes of Perutz and Kendrew in chemistry, and Watson and Crick (with Maurice Wilkins) in physiology or medicine.

BRIGHT BEGINNINGS

The party in 1962 was just the beginning. Over the past half-century the LMB has been at the centre of molecular biology, the discipline at the heart of the life sciences. New groups in developmental biology, immunology, cell biology and neurobiology attest to the expansion of the field. The growth has often been opportunistic, clustered around individuals such as Sydney Brenner, César Milstein, Aaron Klug and Michel Goedert. The simpler rules of only a generation ago (the original procedures for producing monoclonal antibodies were not patented, for instance) have given way to the contemporary competitive world of biotechnology.

As the laboratory has grown, its administrative structure has inevitably become more complex. Until Perutz retired in 1979, it had no director. Perutz didn't want to be one, and it meant he could retain his lab space after retirement. Instead, the lab had a loose management committee, which met occasionally and saw its main job as attracting outstanding talent to the lab. Perutz kept the bureaucratic structures of the laboratory minimalist, and until 1973 a single administrator, Audrey Martin (and her dog Slippers), looked after things. The egalitarianism that Morgan had fostered at Columbia was effectively duplicated in Cambridge, an ethos encouraged by the lab's successive directors — Sydney Brenner, Aaron Klug, Richard Henderson and Hugh Pelham — as each has presided over an ever-larger operation. The LMB now has some 400 workers, about half permanent staff and the rest students and visiting scientists.

It is easier to describe success than to explain it, but several of the characteristics that typified earlier exemplars are also part of the core ideology of the LMB. New techniques, new disciplines, new ways of tackling old problems and the ethos of collegiality have continued to characterize the lab. So has the key personality of Perutz, whose influence shines even after his death. The achievements of the lab's first half-century have been rewarded by even more new buildings, due to open in 2013. Long may the LMB flourish. ■

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Researchers in Côte d'Ivoire bag the skull of a colobus monkey to check for pathogens.

ZOOZONOSIS

Fatal exchange

Nathan Wolfe applauds a tome on interspecies disease transmission that mixes research with human stories.

The exchange of microbes between humans and animals — zoonoses — began to fascinate me nearly 20 years ago, when I was studying wild primate populations. There are a remarkable number of zoonotic agents, ranging from anthrax to HIV, West Nile virus and influenza. It seemed shocking even in the early 1990s that this vastly important class of microbe was considered, if at all, to be a funny-sounding boutique niche in biology.

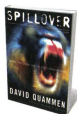
Fortunately, times have changed. Zoonoses have come of age in terms of scientific and public recognition. We now know that these agents are the most likely source of future pandemics. The past few years have seen an explosion in technical literature, government-sponsored research programmes, philanthropic interest and even films such as *Contagion*. During the past year, several general treatments of zoonoses have been published, including Jacques Pepin's *The Origin of AIDS* (Cambridge University Press, 2011), Craig Timberg and Daniel Halperin's *Tinderbox* (Penguin, 2012) and my own *The Viral Storm* (Allen Lane, 2011).

Now comes *Spillover* by David Quammen, one of that rare breed of science journalists who blend exploration with a talent for synthesis and storytelling. Quammen's excellent *The Song of the Dodo* (Prentice Hall & IBD, 1996), on island biogeography,

is difficult to top, but *Spillover* comes close. This is a timely, serious and impressive work that marks the maturation of a field of microbiology.

Quammen takes us into the field, offering an idea of research challenges in remote hotspots of disease emergence such as parts of Gabon and Malaysian Borneo. His narrative on the 'cut hunter' theory, based on our understanding of how HIV began, presents a realistic sense of the first person infected with the chimpanzee simian immunodeficiency virus (SIV) that would become HIV. It is the kind of portrayal that generalists and specialists have waited for.

In researching *Spillover*, Quammen visited scientists such as malaria researchers Janet Cox-Singh and Balbir Singh, and travelled to remote research sites in China, Bangladesh and beyond. He interviewed the usual suspects at leading international universities (myself included, in the context of pandemic prevention). But Quammen also sought out oft-neglected scientists and fieldworkers in places such as the Democratic Republic



Spillover: Animal Infections and the Next Human Pandemic

DAVID QUAMMEN
W. W. Norton: 2012
592 pp. \$28.95, £20

of Congo. These doughty professionals do considerable scientific heavy lifting, negotiating political and sometimes security hurdles to collect the samples that form the backbone of zoonosis research. Refreshingly, Quammen also highlights a number of up-and-coming young researchers in the field.

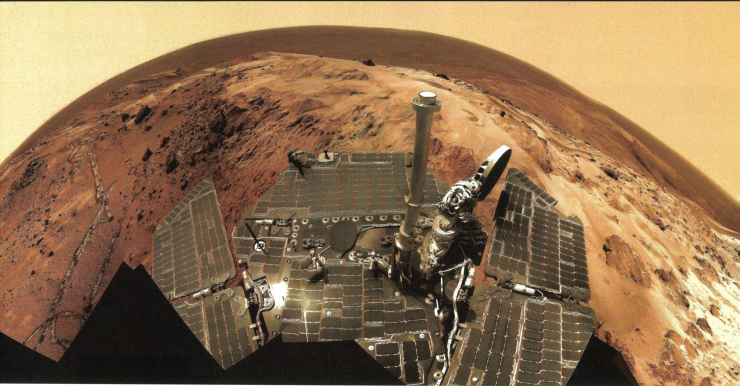
The book gives a dutiful review of the range of research on disease ecology and zoonosis, the subfields and their central concepts. But the behind-the-scenes stories are particularly enjoyable. Quammen brings to light the details left out of papers and technical talks; even workers in the field will find new stories. For example, his accidental encounter and subsequent interviews with survivors of the Mayibout Ebola epidemic in Gabon provide first-person perspectives on the epidemic and the hunting events that led up to it that are absent from any other account I've read.

Specialists will find little new in terms of scientific concepts. Nevertheless, some discussions, such as that on mathematical modelling in chapter three, push scientists towards the next level in their research. There are some minor technical errors, such as the age of the recombination event of monkey SIVs that produced SIV_{cpz}, the variant that infects chimpanzees; Quammen suggests that it may be only hundreds, rather than thousands, of years old. And some will bridle at a few oversimplifications — for example, the suggestion that the H5N1 flu virus is inherently more worrying than H1N1, which among other things belies the potential for reassortment between the two. But these are quibbles.

Importantly, *Spillover* challenges those working in the area of disease ecology and emerging infectious diseases to ask: what is next? Quammen concludes by reviewing some programmes that have been developed by bodies such as the US Department of Defense to understand and address the threats that zoonoses pose for the increasingly susceptible human population. These include the US Agency for International Development's Emerging Pandemic Threats Program, which aims to identify risks early and develop global capacity to stop them before they spread. Quammen rightly believes that such ventures are the way forward.

These efforts, and what they will evolve into, may be pivotal to human survival. As Quammen points out using the example of gypsy moths (*Lymantria dispar*) and nucleopolyhedroviruses, other species on have succumbed to pathogens following explosive population growth. A big question looms over all of us. How will humans fare? ■

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NASA's Spirit rover landed in the Gusev Crater on Mars in January 2004.

MARS EXPLORATION

Roving the red planet

It is people who drive Curiosity and other robot missions on Mars, reminds **Jim Bell**.

There are Martians among us. Hundreds of them, living on Earth but working 'on' Mars, telecommuting to and fro as part of the interplanetary science and exploration programme conducted by NASA and other space agencies. These Martians are the men and women who help to control robots such as the Mars rovers on the red planet's surface, or any of the three satellites orbiting Mars and acquiring remote-sensing data. But both the media and the public tend to anthropomorphize the rovers as the explorers in this frontier world.

Cognitive scientist William Clancey, based at NASA's Ames Research Center in Moffett Field, California, works on how humans and societies adapt their lives and work to computers. During the early years of the Spirit and Opportunity missions, Clancey embedded himself in the Mars Exploration Rover (MER) science and engineering team at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California. His *Working on Mars* documents firsthand many of the highs and lows of the people trying to carry out remotely controlled field science over a vast distance using mobile, programmable laboratories.

By observing these Martian "natives" and interviewing a subset of the science and engineering teams, Clancey captures some of the complex inner workings of a modern scientific expedition that just happens to be

on another planet. And he draws analogies to eighteenth- and nineteenth-century expeditions such as those of James Cook and Alexander von Humboldt.

The rovers' missions have become major media and sociological phenomena. The starry roster now includes the 1997 Mars Pathfinder Sojourner rover, the MER Spirit and Opportunity, which landed in 2004 (Opportunity is still active), and NASA's newest interplanetary vehicle, the car-sized

Curiosity rover that landed in early August. Millions of people worldwide, including educators and their students, have followed the missions online — an opportunity itself made possible mostly through the commitment of the rover science teams and NASA to share the adventures as widely as possible.

So the anthropomorphizing — which happens even among scientists working with the rovers — is perhaps not surprising. The robots are seen as having human-like senses: vision (cameras), touch (arms and drills) and taste (chemical analysis), as well as mobility (wheels). They are viewed as "plucky" or "intrepid", and during their missions "struggle" and "make discoveries". Among my colleagues on the rover science teams, it is common to refer to them as "robot geologists" or, in the case of Curiosity, a "robotic astrobiologist". Ultimately, even Clancey has to admit that casting the robots as valiant explorers in a dangerous land has heightened public interest in them — and perhaps even boosted public and Congressional support for NASA and its planetary-science missions.

Clancey underlines the importance of the unique and unprecedented sociotechnological fusion of remote sensors and the organizational structure, tactical-operations processes and strategic-planning tools pioneered by the MER team (many by trial and error and learning on the fly). Together, these promote the agency of the scientists and engineers and boost their capacity to actively and efficiently engage in scientific fieldwork in remote environments and situations.

One prime example is the way in which the MER planning software for rover driving and instrument deployment integrates the actual geology and



The team in charge of Curiosity celebrates the first pictures sent back from the red planet.

M. DI LORENZO ET AL./AVIATION WEEK/SPACE EXPLORATION ROVER MISSION CORNELL/AT NASA

B. VAN DER BRUG/POOL/GETTY

NATURE.COM
For more on the
Curiosity rover:
nature.com/curiosity



Working on Mars: Voyages of Scientific Discovery with the Mars Exploration Rovers

WILLIAM J. CLANCEY
MIT Press: 2012
328 pp. \$29.95,
£20.95

topography of the rover's environment. Using previous days' imaging, it produces a fully functional computer-graphics representation of the vehicle in a virtual-reality environment; the result is almost like an interplanetary video game. The interaction between the virtual rover and its environment makes observation planning highly intuitive. It helps remote science team members to imagine being there in the field, which, in turn, helps to enable (for example, through guiding the rover's drives or the positioning of the instruments on specific parts of rocks or soils) many of the kinds of measurements that team members would actually make themselves if they were there.

This fusion provides a general model for successful future robotic, and human, remote field science. For example, the Curiosity mission's science and engineering team is using many of the operations and planning tools and structures of the MER mission, although necessarily modified for the specific attributes and constraints of that vehicle, landing site and mission objectives. Remote under-sea expeditions, as well as many other applications of telerobotics and telepresence, could similarly benefit from aspects of the MER model.

The human-centred computing aspects of missions such as those of the Mars rovers have profound implications for the future of space exploration in general. For example, during the past few decades it has been popular to incite "humans versus robots" debates between advocates of crewed spaceflight and of robotic exploration. As Clancey makes clear, the debate is moot.

Humans are already exploring the Solar System using the tools of robotics and the methods of field science. Robotic companions — "intrepid" or otherwise — are absolutely going to be part of humanity's eventual in-person exploration of our planetary neighbours. It is not going to be humans versus robots, but humans and robots, working together. ■

Jim Bell is a professor in the School of Earth and Space Exploration at Arizona State University in Tempe and a member of the camera teams for the Sojourner, Spirit, Opportunity and Curiosity Mars rover missions. His Postcards from Mars is a photographic history of the Mars Exploration Rover missions.
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Books in brief



Secrets of the Ice: Antarctica's Clues to Climate, the Universe, and the Limits of Life

Veronika Meduna YALE UNIVERSITY PRESS 232 pp. £29.95 (2012)
Bleak and storied wonderland it may be, but Antarctica is also the world's biggest lab, where hundreds of scientists cluster to take the planet's pulse. Science writer Veronika Meduna follows the action in this homage to frontier science. Beginning with geological and glaciological findings on Antarctica's climate history, she segues into marine life, the microbes of the cold deserts and the fugitive 'hum' of the Big Bang chased by physicists and astronomers on the continent. A beautifully illustrated journey through 'Mars on Earth'.



The Book of Barely Imagined Beings: A 21st Century Bestiary
Caspar Henderson GRANTA 336 pp. £25 (2012)

Award-winning writer Caspar Henderson read Jorge Luis Borges's *The Book of Imaginary Beings* (1967) and realized that nature's creations often trump the fantastical for sheer surreality. Henderson's mainly marine beasts are a dazzling catch. The "genital fingered", gherkin-sized stomatopod *Gonodactylus smithii*, for instance, uses specialized limbs for defence — delivering enough force to break a bone. Eels, whales, arachnids and more are examined, with Henderson's central concern the survival of all this glory in the midst of the biodiversity drain. Wittily illustrated by Golbanou Moghaddas.



Guesstimation 2.0: Solving Today's Problems on the Back of a Napkin

Lawrence Weinstein PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS 377 pp. £13.95 (2012)

This follow-up to the popular *Guesstimation* offers more on the joy of mathematical estimation, and inspiration for the budding analyst. Physicist Lawrence Weinstein trawls questions from the pragmatic to the bizarre. Among them are his probings of energy, transportation and recycling such as gauging the US plastic-bag pile-up on the basis of hydrocarbon use. He also covers the senses, heavenly bodies, radiation — and the amount of urine in public swimming pools.



Dangerous Work: Diary of an Arctic Adventure

Arthur Conan Doyle (Eds Jon Lellenberg and Daniel Stashower) BRITISH LIBRARY PUBLISHING 368 pp. £25 (2012)

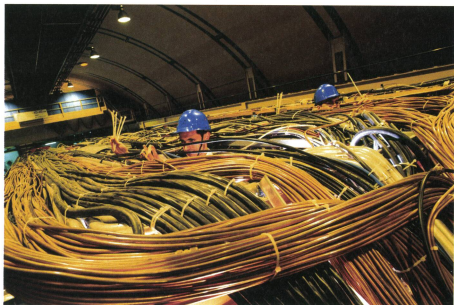
Who knew that Arctic explorers lauded the creator of fiction's most famous sleuth for his own detective work on routes to the North Pole? Arthur Conan Doyle — author of Sherlock Holmes — published the data in the article 'The Glamour of the Arctic' after a youthful stint as ship's surgeon on a Greenland whaler. His diary of the 1880 voyage is here reproduced in facsimile, with published pieces inspired by the trip. Hair-raising incidents abound, from a sudden on-board death by peritonitis to the young medic's periodic falls into ice-strewn waters.



The Real Story of Risk: Adventures in a Hazardous World

Glenn Croston PROMETHEUS BOOKS 256 pp. £16.99 (2012)

Imagine this: you find yourself worrying about shark attacks while crossing a busy road in a daze. Our perception of risk and the reality are frequently at odds, biologist Glenn Croston argues in this jazzy written exploration of the balance between risk and reward. Croston marshals a raft of research on why our view of the phenomenon is so skewed, delving into evolutionary roots, our denial of 'slow' catastrophes, the role of lust in colouring our judgement, our need to belong and much more.



Supercomputers such as that at CERN in Switzerland are becoming faster at a predictable rate.

NETWORK THEORY

The regularities of facts

Carl Bergstrom assesses the power of scientometrics in predicting the shifts and shelf-life of knowledge.

How much of what you know today will be true tomorrow? In a week's time? In a decade? The weather forecast may change overnight; our estimate of the number of genes in the human genome may change in the coming months; our understanding of consciousness may be radically different a century from now.

Knowledge shifts over time, explains Sam Arbesman in *The Half-Life of Facts*, and it does so in predictable ways. The book takes us on a whirlwind tour of emerging fields of scientometrics, and undertakes a broader exploration of metaknowledge. Arbesman details how researchers beginning to focus the big-data lens back on science itself are uncovering quantitative laws and regularities in the way that scientific knowledge is constructed and modified over time.

Like the decay of atoms, individual discoveries may be difficult to predict, but in the aggregate, facts change in highly regular ways. To illustrate this point, Arbesman ranges widely through the scope of human knowledge, drawing on examples from physics and chemistry, technology and medicine, sociology and cultural studies, and even the arts and humanities. For example, over time there is a predictable regularity to how measurement errors get smaller, how computation and travel become faster, how innovations diffuse through social networks

and how technological advances drive increases in human populations. Even the magnetic permeability of iron has increased in a consistent manner with changes in smelting technology.

Arbesman defines facts loosely, not as objective truths but as little pieces of knowledge, right or wrong. This casts a broad net over facts of many different kinds, at the risk of obscuring interesting and important distinctions.

Scientific 'facts' about the natural world — the nature of an electron or the evolutionary significance of a peacock's tail — change as science progresses and our explanatory frameworks shift. Statistics as facts — batting averages, gross national products, crime rates — change not because the body of knowledge around them changes, but because the world is changing beneath our feet and new events are transpiring.

So statistical facts need not be as interconnected as scientific facts; for example, Guinness World Records is a catalogue of



The Half-Life of Facts: Why Everything We Know Has an Expiration Date
SAMUEL ARBESMAN
Current: 2012
256 pp. \$25.95,
£18.99

independent assertions. In 2011, Zac the macaw set the record for the most basketballs slam-dunked by a parrot in one minute; meanwhile, the world record for the fastest 100-metre hurdles wearing diving fins remained unchanged at 14.8 seconds.

But in proper network-theorist fashion, Arbesman focuses more on the similarities than on the differences between these distinct types of fact and processes of change. Both kinds are generated at predictable rates, change in predictable ways and are subject to scientometric analysis.

One quibble I have with the book is that occasionally I feel Arbesman's enthusiasm gets the better of him, and he accepts the conclusions of sound-bite science without adequate scrutiny. For example, if approximately 80% of citations are copied from earlier citations of the same material (M. V. Simkin and V. P. Roychowdhury *Complex Sys.* 14, 269–274; 2003), can we join Arbesman in the presumption that researchers read only 20% of what they cite? Or might this pattern arise because authors find it easier to compile their bibliographies from other reference lists — irrespective of whether they have read these papers?

Overall, however, Arbesman is a delightful guide to the territory, patently in love with this emerging field. He is also a skilled storyteller, and his wide-eyed reporting invigorates material that could have been dry and academic.

The chapter on hidden knowledge deserves particular note. It addresses one of the most pressing scientific problems we face: how to make vital new connections among ideas. In an era in which exhaustive reading is no longer possible and library-shelf browsing is infrequent, how can we design mechanisms that connect scholars with the ideas that they need to move forwards?

Arbesman hints at possible elements of a solution: innovation prizes, social tagging, systematic meta-analyses and automated discovery programs. Big changes are coming in the very near future, driven by the confluence of the digital revolution in publishing, the explosion of computational capacity and the accumulated strain of a 350-year-old system of scientific communication pushed to the breaking point in an exponentially larger world.

The current generation will solve these problems, and change how science as a social and communicative process is practised. Reading *The Half-Life of Facts*, I became excited about the prospect of living through — and perhaps even contributing to — this change. ■

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Biodiversity needs a scientific approach

We agree with Esther Turnhout and colleagues (*Nature* **488**, 454–455; 2012) that the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) should take citizen knowledge and non-monetary values into account to improve the science-policy interface for biodiversity protection. Even so, knowledge used to inform policy must be produced through an objective process if it is to withstand scrutiny. This demands a science-based approach.

Science sets a standard for data quality, not for who collects the data. It provides a common currency for understanding the consequences for biodiversity of actions arising from the values of different stakeholders, including local communities, hunter-gatherers, commercial exploiters and conservationists.

The role of IPBES in policy formulation means that it will inevitably meet resistance that will seek to undermine data credibility, the assessment process and the platform itself. Instead of avoidance strategies, we need mechanisms for successful negotiation of such controversies to support transformation. David A. Westcott, Frederieke J. Kroon, Andy W. Sheppard CSIRO Ecosystem Sciences, Australia. david.westcott@csiro.au

Change of heart on nanoparticle risks

You contend that most nanotechnology researchers now acknowledge that some areas of their work raise legitimate environmental, health and safety concerns (*Nature* **488**, 576–579; 2012). This was not the case a decade ago, when we at the Action Group on Erosion, Technology and Concentration (ETC) called for a moratorium on the commercialization of

products containing engineered nanoparticles.

In 2002, scientists could point us to only one peer-reviewed study of nanotube toxicity, and companies were still sending a Material Safety Data Sheet for graphite with carbon nanotube shipments. ETC's concerns were dismissed as alarmist. We welcome the change in attitude.

ETC's central concern has always been the economic impact on populations in developing countries resulting from the market disruptions that are expected with the advent of new nanoproducts and processes. We have consistently dismissed the hypothetical concept of 'grey goo' — uncontrolled self-replicating nanorobots — as a red herring.

Finally, ETC has no connection to ITS, the group that claimed responsibility for the nanotech-related bombings in Mexico. ETC opposes violence in all forms.

Silvia Ribeiro ETC Group, Mexico City, Mexico. etc@etgroup.org

Fleischmann denied due credit

Philip Ball's obituary of Martin Fleischmann (*Nature* **489**, 34; 2012), like many others, ignores the experimental evidence contradicting the view that cold fusion is 'pathological science' (see www.lenr.org). I gave an alternative perspective in my obituary of Fleischmann in *The Guardian* (see go.nature.com/rzvkfz), describing what I believe to be the true nature of what Ball calls a "Shakespearean tragedy".

The situation at the time of the announcement of cold fusion was confused because of errors in the nuclear measurements (neither Fleischmann nor his co-worker Stanley Pons had expertise in this area) and because of the difficulty researchers had with replication. Such problems are not unusual in materials science. Some were able, I contend, to

get the experiment to work (for example, M. C. H. McKubre et al. *J. Electroanal. Chem.* **368**, 55–56; 1994; E. Storms and C. L. Talcott *Fusion Technol.* **17**, 680; 1990) and, in my view, to confirm both excess heat and nuclear products.

Scepticism also arose because the amount of nuclear radiation observed was very low compared with that expected from the claimed levels of excess heat. But it could be argued that the experiment never excluded the possibility that the liberated energy might be taken up directly by the metal lattice within which the hydrogen molecules were absorbed.

In my opinion, none of this would have mattered had journal editors not responded to this scepticism, or to emotive condemnation of the experimenters, by setting an unusually high bar for publication of papers on cold fusion. This meant that most scientists were denied a view of the accumulating positive evidence.

The result? Fleischmann was effectively denied the credit due to him, and doomed to become the tragic figure in Ball's account. Brian D. Josephson University of Cambridge, UK. bdj10@cam.ac.uk

European biodiesel can be sustainable

An accurate evaluation of the sustainability of European oilseed rape for biodiesel production would be a useful resource in discussions of the European Union's bioenergy policies. Your ill-judged pronouncement in an online News report that rapeseed biodiesel fails the sustainability test (*Nature* <http://doi.org/jdn>; 2012) risks confusing the facts by quoting questionable figures from a preliminary study (G. Pehnel and C. Vietze *Jena Econ. Res. Pap.* 039; 2012).

These figures concern some of the most important parameters used in sustainability calculations. The study

considerably underestimated mean annual seed yields of rapeseed used for biodiesel, by using outdated yield values from the entire European Union (around 2.8 tonnes per hectare for 1991–2005), rather than current yields from the principal biodiesel-producing countries such as Germany (3.8 tonnes per hectare for 2005–10; see <http://faostat3.fao.org>). The input values were also based on energy-intensive production procedures (deodorization, for example) that are only used in processing rapeseed oil for food, and on unrealistic transportation emission values. Incorrect input data can seriously influence the outcome of a sustainability evaluation.

Political decisions need to be based on reasoned and constructive discussion about issues as controversial as renewable biofuels, which in turn must be based on strong, peer-reviewed science.

Rod Snowdon, Wolfgang Friedt Justus Liebig University, Giessen, Germany. rod.snowdon@agr.uni-giessen.de

Reviews turn facts into understanding

Your Editorial on *h*-index forecasting (*Nature* **489**, 177; 2012) perpetuates the myth that: "Review articles, which may not add much to the research, count the same as original research papers, which contribute a great deal." Probably the reverse is true. A research paper usually provides just one or two new facts, whereas reviews synthesize our understanding more broadly and make it more concrete.

Some reviews summarize thousands of papers (see, for instance, D. B. Kell *BMC Med. Genom.* **2**, 2; 2009) and turn an inchoate and stochastic scientific literature into knowledge.

Douglas B. Kell University of Manchester, UK. dbk@manchester.ac.uk



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RESEARCH

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PUBLISHED 30 SEPTEMBER 2012

STEM CELLS

Simpler route to haploid stem cells

Haploid cells have several advantages for genetic study, but — apart from those in the germ line — they are rare in animals. Recent reports of haploid embryonic stem (ES) cells derived from activated oocytes in medaka fish and mice raised the possibility that engineered mammalian haploid cells might be good for genetic studies if reliable and efficient methods of producing them could be found. Zhou Qi and colleagues have taken a step in that direction with the development of pluripotent androgenetic haploid embryonic stem (ahES) cells and the generation of healthy transgenic mice by 'fertilizing' genetically modified ahES cells with oocytes. This development could lead to simpler and more efficient gene-targeting strategies.

Androgenetic haploid embryonic stem cells produce live transgenic mice

W Li *et al.*
doi:10.1038/nature.11435

VIROLOGY

Natural AIDS resistance boost

Indian rhesus macaques expressing the Mamu-B*08 molecule, which has important structural similarities with the human leukocyte antigen class I molecule HLA-B*27, show a measure of control of the highly pathogenic SIVmac239 virus. This system provides a model for the few HIV-infected humans that have 'elite' control over the virus. David Watkins

and colleagues now show that vaccine-induced CD8⁺ T cells narrowly directed against three immunodominant T-cell epitopes bound by Mamu-B*08 (Vif RL8, Vif RL9 and Nef RL10) can control replication of SIVmac239 in Mamu-B*08⁺ macaques. This work could provide pointers to the development of vaccines capable of achieving long-term control, over the AIDS virus.

Vaccine-induced CD8⁺ T cells control AIDS virus replication

P A Mudd *et al.*
doi:10.1038/nature.11443

CANCER

Mitochondrial defect drives non-autonomous tumour progression through Hippo signalling in *Drosophila*

S Ohsawa *et al.*
doi:10.1038/nature.11452

DEVELOPMENTAL BIOLOGY

Clonal allelic predetermination of immunoglobulin- κ rearrangement

M Farago *et al.*
doi:10.1038/nature.11496

STRUCTURAL BIOLOGY

Structure-based prediction of protein-protein interactions on a genome-wide scale

Q C Zhang *et al.*
doi:10.1038/nature.11503

PUBLISHED 3 OCTOBER 2012

DRUG DISCOVERY

Alternative pain relief channel

S. Diochot *et al.* report the isolation of a class of peptides from the African snake the black mamba (*Dendroaspis polylepis polylepis*) that can abolish pain through the inhibition of particular subtypes of acid-sensing ion channels expressed

in either central or peripheral neurons. These peptides — called mambalgins — are as effective as morphine in pain relief but are not toxic to mice and do not induce tolerance or respiratory distress. The effect differs from the analgesia associated with other animal peptides that block acid-sensing ion channels, which involves activation of the enkephalin system.

Black mamba venom peptides target acid-sensing ion channels to abolish pain

S Diochot *et al.*
doi:10.1038/nature.11494

PLANT GENOMICS

Rice origins in gene maps

Cultivated rice (*Oryza sativa*) is thought to have been domesticated from wild rice (*Oryza rufipogon*) thousands of years ago. This Chinese-Japanese collaboration reports whole-genome sequences from 446 wild-rice isolates from across Asia and Oceania, and from more than a thousand *indica* and *japonica* subspecies of cultivated rice. The resulting map of genome variation will be an important resource for rice breeding and for crop domestication research.

A map of rice genome variation reveals the origin of cultivated rice

X Huang *et al.*
doi:10.1038/nature.11532

STRUCTURAL BIOLOGY

The arsenate/phosphate riddle

How do bacteria discriminate between the chemically very similar phosphate, which is essential to life, and arsenate,

which is highly toxic to most organisms? Mikael Elias *et al.* biochemically characterize several of the periplasmic phosphate-binding proteins (PBPs) that mediate phosphate uptake into bacterial cells. The proteins discriminate phosphate from arsenate by factors of between 500 and 4,000, depending on how prevalent arsenate is in the habitat. Comparison of ultra-high-resolution structures of PBPs from arsenate-sensitive and arsenate-resistant bacteria suggests that arsenate, with a radius just 4% larger than that of phosphate, distorts an unusually short high-energy hydrogen bond that is a key component of the recognition site.

The molecular basis of phosphate discrimination in arsenate-rich environments

M Elias *et al.*
doi:10.1038/nature.11517

CANCER

Adenoma-linked barrier defects and microbial products drive IL-23/IL-17-mediated tumour growth

S Grivennikov *et al.*
doi:10.1038/nature.11465

NEUROSCIENCE

Dopaminergic neurons inhibit striatal output through non-canonical release of GABA

Ni X Tritsch *et al.*
doi:10.1038/nature.11466

CLIMATE SCIENCE

Delayed build-up of Arctic ice sheets during 400,000-year minima in insolation variability

Q Hao *et al.*
doi:10.1038/nature.11493

MATERIALS

Probing graphene phase boundaries with optical microscopy

D L Duong *et al.*
doi:10.1038/nature.11562

FORUM: Climate science

The aerosol effect

Anthropogenic aerosols in the atmosphere undoubtedly influence climate. But do the approaches taken in climate models to account for the effects of aerosols provide meaningful estimates of those effects? Two climate scientists offer their opinions.

THE TOPIC IN BRIEF

- Aerosol particles in the atmosphere influence clouds, and thereby climate, because they act as nuclei for cloud formation.
- Computational models of climate systems have sought to incorporate the effects of aerosols on clouds through parameterizations.

- However, the representation of aerosol–cloud interactions in climate models is based on simplifications that ignore the complexity of the small-scale physical processes governing such interactions in the real world.
- The value of studying the effects of aerosol–cloud interactions in climate models has therefore been questioned.

Grains of salt

BJORN STEVENS

There is something captivating about the idea that fine particulate matter, suspended almost invisibly in the atmosphere, holds the key to some of the greatest mysteries of climate science. Recent studies have reported that interactions of such aerosols with clouds may be hiding a large part of the sensitivity of global temperature to increasing levels of greenhouse gases¹. It has also been claimed that aerosol–cloud interactions are reshaping patterns of rainfall² and even influencing the development of tornadoes³. But such interactions invariably turn out to be more nuanced than the simple ideas underpinning these and related studies would lead one to suspect. This explains why, despite decades of research, no consensus has emerged as to exactly what, other than perhaps a slight mitigation of twentieth-century global warming, is attributable to aerosol–cloud interactions⁴.

To put matters into context, consider the analogous question of the effect of carbon dioxide on climate. Carbon dioxide always has the same composition, its lifetime is very much longer than that of atmospheric circulation systems, and it affects fluxes of radiant energy in ways that are well understood and are not particularly contingent on other factors. By contrast, aerosol particles can differ widely in composition, are ephemeral and affect clouds (and hence radiative fluxes) in ways that are poorly understood and depend on a long list of factors.

To determine the correct sign — let alone the magnitude — of the effect of some important aerosol–cloud interactions, one may, to borrow words from elsewhere, need a weatherman to know which way the wind blows⁵. Models can make good weathermen, and thus provide information about the wind, as well as about many of the other factors on which aerosol–cloud interactions depend. But for climate models, this is true only on scales that are so large (hundreds of kilometres) as to be almost irrelevant. On fine scales (tens of metres), at which there is some understanding of how aerosol particles influence cloud microstructure, climate modellers are groping in the dark.

Aerosol–cloud interactions are not only contingent on, but also compound, the 'cloud question'. It is one thing to ask, as the cloud question does, how the distribution of clouds responds to robust changes in the large-scale environment — for instance, changes that follow temperature. It is quite another to ask how indeterminate changes in clouds will be modified by uncertain interactions with aerosol particles whose properties are also not well understood. So, although some answers to the cloud question seem to be within reach, a quantitative understanding of the global effect of aerosols on clouds is definitely not. Fortunately, given that global aerosol burdens have remained more or less constant for a decade or longer⁶, and that greenhouse-gas concentrations are increasing relentlessly, answering the cloud question might help to answer the more pressing questions related to Earth's changing climate.

Our poor understanding of the global effect of aerosols on clouds means that the incorporation of additional details into climate models does not make the models fundamentally

better or more reliable, just more complex. Additional complexity can be great fun, but it should not disguise the fact that, at least for aerosol–cloud interactions, much is speculative, and the results of such complex models should be taken with a grain of salt.

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An essential pursuit

OLIVIER BOUCHER

Aerosols and clouds influence each other through multiple interactions at temporal and spatial scales that span many orders of magnitude. Increasingly detailed observations and modelling studies have revealed the complexity of aerosol–cloud interactions. Such complexity was certainly not recognized when the 'climate forcing' associated with these interactions — that is, their effects on the amount of energy entering and escaping from the atmosphere as radiation — was first estimated in an atmospheric general circulation model⁷. After almost two decades of research, parameterizations of these interactions in large-scale models remain simplistic in some respects, but they are neither worthless nor useless.

Estimates of anthropogenic climate forcing are essential for constraining climate sensitivity to such forcing in observations⁸. They are also important for understanding recent climate change⁹ and to improve regional decadal climate prediction. Although small-scale observations and models are invaluable for investigating how man-made aerosols might affect cloud properties, they cannot easily be scaled up because of the large variability of aerosols, clouds (Fig. 1) and environmental conditions, and because they overlook the feedbacks on aerosols and clouds that act through large-scale atmospheric dynamics.

Satellite observations have been widely used to infer correlations between aerosols



Figure 1 | Cloud diversity. Climate models must represent the net effect of clouds on solar and thermal irradiances over scales that often encompass a rich variety of cloud types, such as the diverse range in the cloud field pictured. Aerosol particles affect the microphysical structure of clouds, as well as irradiances in the cloud environment. The net effect of these interactions on the radiative properties of clouds is poorly understood, and incorporating them realistically into climate models is a challenge.

and cloud properties or precipitation. They can be combined with observations of Earth's radiative budget — the amount of energy that enters and leaves Earth's atmosphere as radiation — to estimate aerosol forcing on a global scale. The methodological challenges of such an approach, however, are increasingly being recognized, because both aerosols and cloud properties depend hugely on meteorological conditions. Climate models, although imperfect, are therefore indispensable for calculating climate forcing by anthropogenic aerosols. Such models are the only means of representing the feedbacks induced by aerosol–cloud interactions at the global scale. They can also be used to tease apart the intertwined effects of weather and aerosols on clouds, which currently impede observational studies¹⁰.

Estimates of climate forcing from aerosol–cloud interactions have not varied much over time, even though research has moved from empirical to more mechanistic approaches for parameterizing these interactions. This does not mean, however, that such estimates are robust. They often lack a proper treatment of uncertainties, and there are indications from temperature observations that many climate-model simulations of such interactions imply too much cooling.

It is therefore vital to continue with efforts to parameterize aerosol–cloud interactions in climate models as a means of overcoming the present limitations. Indeed, some promising avenues of research are opening up. It is now possible to perform high-resolution simulations that incorporate complex microphysical representations of aerosol–cloud interactions over sufficiently large areas, and for long enough periods, to investigate the couplings

between a cloud field and its environment, thus going some way towards bridging the gap between the cloud scale and the global scale. New methods for representing the statistics of cloud properties at scales below those resolved by climate models have also been developed^{11,12}. Finally, cloud microphysics

MUCOSAL IMMUNOLOGY

Infection induces friendly fire

Our immune system usually ignores 'friendly' gut bacteria. But when infection with a pathogen damages the intestine's mucosal lining, the resident microbes can invade the body, inducing immune responses directed at themselves.

DAVID MASOPIST & VAIVA VEZYS

The mammalian gastrointestinal tract harbours an extensive microbial community that is usually well tolerated by the immune system. Sometimes, however, inappropriate immune responses directed against these 'commensal' organisms arise, such as in inflammatory bowel disease. But how such responses are triggered is unclear. Writing in *Science*, Hand *et al.*¹ demonstrate that pathogenic infections that disrupt the integrity of the gut's mucosal barriers can precipitate the development of long-lived immunity directed against the host's resident microbes.

CD4⁺ T cells are a class of immune cell that

is now recognized as being important for numerical weather prediction; systematic verification of weather-model outputs against observations, and powerful data-assimilation techniques, may provide new insight into aerosol–cloud interactions. With so many encouraging developments, let's embrace the challenge! ■

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deploys potent effector functions to combat infections. During development, a repertoire of T cells is generated such that there will be low numbers of cells specific for any given antigen — a substance that stimulates responses from T and B cells of the immune system. 'Naïve' T cells are those that have not yet encountered the antigen for which their own antigen receptor is specific. Infection with a pathogen stimulates proliferation of pathogen-specific T cells, which not only increases the number of these cells, but also causes their differentiation to effector cells. As the proliferative response is ending, a population of long-lived pathogen-specific 'memory' cells is established, which provides a heightened state

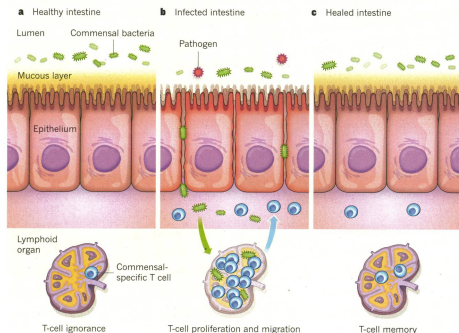


Figure 1 | Breaching the barrier. **a**, The lumen of the mammalian intestine contains abundant non-pathogenic bacteria, which are called commensal bacteria. Although there are CD4⁺ T cells in distant lymphoid organs (such as the spleen or lymph nodes) that specifically recognize these 'friendly' bacteria, these T cells typically ignore the bacteria and remain in a naive state. **b**, Hand *et al.*³ show that infecting mice with a protozoan pathogen that causes intestinal damage allows the commensal bacteria to migrate to other parts of the body. This results in activation and proliferation of both pathogen-specific (not shown) and commensal-specific CD4⁺ T cells in the lymphoid organs, and migration of these cells to the intestine. **c**, The authors also show that a population of commensal-specific memory T cells persists in the intestine long after the resolution of infection and restoration of the mucosal barrier.

of readiness to respond to repeat infections. The signals received from different microbes cause the responding CD4⁺ T cells to adopt effector functions best suited to controlling the infection². However, if a naive T cell encounters its specific antigen in the absence of infection, it is rendered 'tolerant', preventing a misdirected immune response. Thus, the context of initial antigen exposure is pivotal in determining T-cell behaviour.

Hand *et al.* examined CD4⁺ T cells specific for the flagellin protein expressed by certain *Clostridium* bacteria that are commensals in the gut lumen of adult mice (Fig. 1). They found that these non-pathogenic organisms are typically ignored by T cells, which remain in their naive state. However, when the researchers infected the mice with the parasitic protozoan *Toxoplasma gondii*, which causes intestinal damage, the clostridia breached the mucosal barrier and could be recovered from lymphoid organs such as lymph nodes and spleen. This translocation of the commensal bacteria caused naive *Clostridium*-flagellin-specific CD4⁺ T cells residing in lymphoid organs to proliferate and migrate to the gut.

Interestingly, as the *Clostridium*-specific T cells proliferated, they differentiated into effector T cells in a manner that mimicked the CD4⁺ T-cell response to *T. gondii*. They upregulated expression of T-bet, a gene-regulatory

protein, and they acquired the ability to produce the cell-signalling molecule interferon- γ . These behaviours are characteristic of the Th1 differentiation state, which is associated with immune responses to intracellular infections but has also been implicated in numerous autoimmune diseases. Hand and colleagues also show that the mice retained a population of flagellin-specific memory CD4⁺ T cells long after resolution of the *T. gondii* infection and re-formation of the mucosal barrier.

These results have several interesting ramifications. For instance, inflammatory bowel disease (IBD), which includes Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis, is characterized by aberrant CD4⁺ T-cell responses directed against intestinal commensal bacteria³. Although it is not clear how and why these responses are initiated, it is known that variations in several genes, including ones that regulate the immune response to gut bacteria and maintenance of the mucosal barrier, are tightly linked to IBD incidence⁴. However, identical twins with equal genetic susceptibility to IBD do not always both experience disease, which suggests a critical role for environmental triggers in this condition⁵.

Hand *et al.* provide evidence that exposure to pathogenic microbes could provide such a trigger. First, their results demonstrate that CD4⁺ T-cell ignorance of commensal bacteria

can be broken during an infection, probably because of the increased amount of microbial antigen that is available to stimulate the immune system. Second, they show that pathogenic infections shape the differentiation program of contemporaneous commensal-specific CD4⁺ T-cell responses. In other words, when the commensal-specific CD4⁺ T cells are first activated, it is in the context of infection, and so they adopt an effector program that is dictated by the offending pathogen rather than by the resident gut microbes.

This differentiation program is distinct from that seen in experimental situations in which CD4⁺ T cells are exposed to commensal microbes in the absence of pathogenic infection^{6–9}. It will be interesting to examine the relationship between various infections and the development of IBD-like disease in genetically predisposed mouse models. This is likely to be a fruitful line of enquiry, because a recent study has shown that infection of genetically susceptible mice with murine norovirus tipped the balance towards Crohn's-like disease symptoms¹⁰.

Hand and colleagues' study also emphasizes the fact that memory CD4⁺ T cells specific for commensal microbes may exist. The memory T-cell population studied by the authors, which was specific for a single peptide from *Clostridium*, was fairly small. However, when one considers that more than 3 million non-redundant genes have been identified¹¹ in the human intestinal microbiome (all the micro-organisms in the gut), this raises the question of whether a substantial fraction of all memory CD4⁺ T cells may actually be directed against commensal microbes. If this is the case, it would be particularly interesting to examine the effect of these cells on immune responses to subsequent intestinal infections (either with the same pathogen or one not previously encountered) that also cause disruptions of the mucosal barrier. It is conceivable that the commensal-specific memory CD4⁺ T cells have a protective capacity, by amplifying immunological sensing of barrier disruption. However, a commensal-reactive immune T-cell population could also contribute to inflammatory or autoimmune diseases of tissues exposed to such microbes, which include the skin and upper respiratory tract.

Thus, in addition to illuminating a potential mechanism underlying inflammatory conditions such as IBD, Hand and colleagues' findings indicate a potential limitation of the 'specific-pathogen-free' mouse model in which most basic immunological experiments are conducted. Such mice are not typically exposed to gut infections that compromise barrier integrity. This point provocatively suggests that, when studying immune responses to pathogens or commensal organisms, immunologists should also consider examining mice that have experienced past intestinal infections, because such infections could have a lasting

impact on the immune system and might better recapitulate the human condition. ■

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QUANTUM PHYSICS

Cruise control for a qubit

Continuous feedback control — monitoring a system and adjusting its dynamics — is widely used to keep systems 'on track'. This approach has now been used to maintain the cycling of a quantum bit almost indefinitely. SEE LETTER P.77

HOWARD M. WISEMAN

Imagine you have to test-drive a car on a smallish circular racetrack, making exactly one circuit every minute. There is a big clock on a tower by the start/finish line. What strategy do you adopt? An obvious one is to keep comparing your position around the track with the position of the second hand around the clock. If your circular position lags that of the second hand, then step on the accelerator; if it leads, then ease off (Fig. 1). This illustrates three typical features of a process known as continuous feedback control: monitoring, comparison with a goal and dynamical adjustment¹. On page 77 of this issue, Vijay *et al.*² apply this type of control to the most basic quantum system: a two-state system called a quantum bit (qubit). By monitoring the excitation of their qubit with quite high efficiency, inferring its lag or lead relative to a radio-frequency field (their clock), and modulating the power applied to their qubit, they maintain a regular cycling between the qubit's excited and ground states almost indefinitely.

In an ideal world, when the power supplied by a car's engine equals the power dissipated (for example, by air resistance and friction), the car's speed will remain steady. But in the real world, unpredictable fluctuations in the car and its environment (such as variations in wind speed, air pressure, tyre pressure, oil temperature, road surface and other variables) will cause the speed to vary even with constant power. With no feedback control, the position of the

car around the track would, within an hour, become completely unrelated to the position of the second hand on the reference clock. In most modern cars, cruise control can do a good job of keeping the speed within a narrow range around a set value. But for the task in hand, a more sophisticated cruise-control mechanism would be needed, which compares

the position of the car with the position of the second hand, as described above.

In their experiment, Vijay *et al.*² use a transmon³, a tiny superconducting device that can be restricted (at ultra-low temperatures) to just two quantum states: its ground state and its first excited state. These two states define the qubit. The qubit dynamics in this experiment is in many ways analogous to that of the car on the circular track. If the start/finish line is like the ground state of the qubit, the point diametrically opposite is the excited state. The other points around the track are analogous to superpositions of the excited and ground states — they are still definite ('pure') states of the qubit, but, unlike the ground and excited states, they do not have a definite energy value.

By applying a microwave driving field, the qubit can be made to cycle around the 'superposition track' at a particular frequency, clockwise from ground state to excited state and back again. But like a car, the qubit also suffers from power dissipation. In the quantum world, this necessarily gives rise to fluctuations, even at zero temperature⁴. As a consequence, after several microseconds the state of the qubit on its cycle will be completely unpredictable.

It is not obvious a priori that using continuous measurement and feedback control to lock the qubit cycling to that of an external clock will work, because in the quantum regime monitoring induces fluctuations⁵. However, as the original theoretical proposal for this quantum feedback protocol showed⁶, the process should work well for strong and efficient monitoring.

To monitor their transmon qubit, Vijay *et al.* coupled the qubit to a microwave probe field in a superconducting resonator that has a higher frequency than the driving field. The probe field continuously leaks out of the resonator, and is amplified into a macroscopic current. The authors used a simple feedback-control algorithm to modulate the driving field in proportion to the deviation of the observed current from an ideal sinusoidal current generated by the radio-frequency field acting as the external clock.

So how well does it work? Although

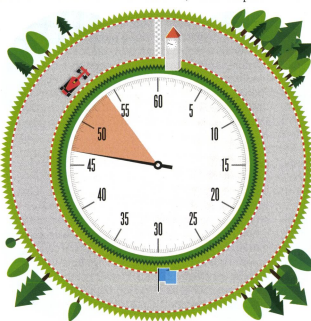


Figure 1 | Locking cycles to an external clock. Vijay and colleagues² used continuous feedback control to keep a quantum bit (qubit) cycling between its ground and excited state. The process is analogous to a car driver trying to make one lap every minute on a circular racetrack by monitoring the position of the car on the track and comparing it with the position of the second hand of a clock on a tower by the start/finish line. In this illustration, the car is slightly ahead of where it should be, so the driver should ease off the accelerator. In this manner, the driver can continuously compensate for any fluctuations affecting the car's speed. In a system that dissipates power, such as the qubit, fluctuations are inevitable, and are also introduced by the measurement of the qubit's state. In this analogy, the qubit's excited state is equivalent to the car being at a point (blue flag) that is diametrically opposite to the start/finish line, which corresponds to the ground state.

the monitoring was strong (compared with the dissipation), its efficiency was less than 50%. As a result, the feedback control could not do better than to keep the qubit state more or less in the correct half (as defined by the external clock) of the superposition track at any given time. Moreover, for about 10% of the time the transmon was found in a higher excited state than its first excited state, outside the qubit's two states altogether. But compared with the no-feedback result of complete unpredictability within several microsecond, the observed stabilization of the qubit's cycling is a big step forward in the feedback control of an individual qubit.

This work paves the way to many more

experiments on qubit feedback measurement and control, which would be enabled by more efficient monitoring than that achieved here. These experiments include rapid purification of a qubit⁵, tests of quantum-jump theory⁶, feedback control based on measurement back-action⁷ and feedback control based on the quantum Zeno effect⁸. In the longer term, continuous feedback control of multi-qubit systems is one path to correcting quantum errors in a quantum computer. With Vijay and colleagues' experiment, solid-state physics joins quantum optics at the forefront of quantum feedback-control investigations. ■

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of hits. To reduce the complexity of this gene set and to remove redundant information, Qin *et al.* created metagenomic linkage groups (MLGs) of genes that showed similar profiles in either the patient or the control samples, in terms of taxonomic assignment or relative abundance of the markers (Fig. 1). This approach addressed two major problems with current metagenomic analyses. First, analyses so far have depended on comparisons with available microbial reference sequences to assess the species and functional composition of the metagenome. Such studies are limited by the fact that many detected sequences do not map to these references, so uncharacterized or rare microbes may go undetected. But by using MLGs, rare gene regions can be associated with a larger MLG, and therefore taken into account. Second, associations based on taxonomy alone can be misleading, as gene transfer between species or variation in gene content within a species can complicate taxonomic assignments.

One of the associations with type 2 diabetes identified by Qin and colleagues was a depletion of butyrate-producing bacteria. Butyrate is a molecule used as an energy source by cells in the gut lining, but it has also been suggested to reduce inflammatory responses in the colon⁹. Consequently, a decrease in butyrate may contribute to the increased intestinal inflammation implicated in insulin resistance⁹ and type 2 diabetes. Qin *et al.* also saw an increase in colonization by opportunistic pathogens and an enrichment in microbial genes related to oxidative-stress resistance in people with the disease; both of these changes may further contribute to the inflammatory environment.

However, before the results of this study can be accepted as providing generalizable risk factors for type 2 diabetes, further investigations will be necessary. First, obesity was not a factor in this study, which — given the link between type 2 diabetes and obesity — limits its applicability. Similarly, diet, which is known to have a strong influence on the composition of the gut microbiota⁴, must be considered in

GENOMICS

Resident risks

An innovative method for probing the genomes of the vast community of microorganisms that inhabit the human gut provides an alternative approach to identifying risk factors for type 2 diabetes. SEE LETTER P.55

JULIA OH & JULIA A. SEGRE

The interplay between genetics and the environment in controlling our health remains an open area of investigation. Technological advances in genome sequencing and analysis have empowered the search for the genetic determinants of human traits and diseases, but genetic variants that directly cause disease have so far been identified for only a small proportion of common diseases. For many other conditions, variants that increase disease risk are known, but the incompleteness of these associations suggests that environmental factors significantly contribute to the likelihood of development of these diseases.

A candidate source of environmental influence on disease development that is gaining increasing attention is the human microbiome — the trillions of microorganisms that inhabit our bodies. Our primary genome is in continual interaction with the combined genomes of these residents, which makes this 'metagenome' a fascinating part-environmental, part-genetic factor in human biology. On page 55 of this issue, Qin *et al.*¹ present an innovative method for searching the microbial metagenome for disease risk factors, using as their example type 2 diabetes, a disease that is reaching epidemic proportions in many regions across the world.

Heritability estimates for the common forms of type 2 diabetes range between 30 and 60%, suggesting that it is a complex disorder with multiple interacting genetic and environmental components. Genome-wide association

studies (GWAS), which are used to investigate individuals' DNA sequences for genetic variants associated with disease, have identified variants that contribute to the development of type 2 diabetes, but these only partially explain the variation in individual risk^{2,3}. Other significant risk factors for the disease, such as obesity and diet, are also associated with an altered gut microbiome⁴, suggesting that this disease is a good candidate in which to search for risk factors associated with the human microbial metagenome.

Qin *et al.* surveyed the gut metagenomes (derived from stool samples) of 345 Han Chinese individuals with and without type 2 diabetes using a method called shotgun sequencing, which produces random fragments of DNA sequence from the complex mix of microbial genomes. These fragments are then assembled into larger, gene-length fragments on the basis of sequence overlap. The authors compared these larger fragments with reference genome sequences and gene-function databases to determine the proportions of different bacterial species present in the samples, and consequently the relative representation of various microbial functional and metabolic attributes. They then used these 'markers' in a similar way to how variations at specific nucleotides are used in GWAS to identify blocks of DNA sequences, and carried out a 'metagenome-wide association study' (MGWAS) to identify different features of the metagenomes in people with and without the disease.

The MGWAS identified more than 42,000 gene markers associated with type 2 diabetes — a massive and unwieldy number

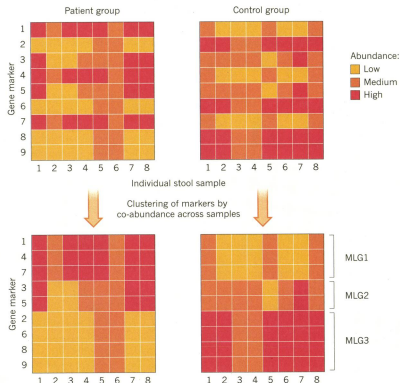


Figure 1 | Mining the metagenome. Qin *et al.*¹ studied the metagenome of the human gut — the combined genomes of the trillions of its resident microorganisms — in the search for microbial species and gene functions that are associated with type 2 diabetes. First, they identified microbial gene markers and determined the abundance of these markers in stool samples from a group of patients with type 2 diabetes and from a control group of people without the disease. The authors then clustered these markers according to their relative abundance, and assigned markers that had similar abundance profiles within either the patient or the control group to a metagenomic linkage group (MLG). In this example, MLG1 is over-represented in the patient group, MLG2 is similarly represented in patient and control groups and MLG3 is over-represented in the control group. The use of MLGs reduced the number of associations for subsequent analysis, minimized redundancy and allowed rare gene markers to be taken into account.

future research. Butyrate is a by-product of the metabolism of plant-based foods, but this raises a 'chicken-and-egg' question of whether individuals with type 2 diabetes have a diet lacking in these foods to begin with, leading to differences in the composition of their gut microbiomes, or whether it is the microbiota that contributes to disease development. To clarify some of these questions, it would be of great interest for future investigations to cross ethnic lines and to follow patients on controlled diets over extended periods. Furthermore, it is important to note that this study was associative rather than causal, and that controlled prospective studies are needed to better distinguish a metagenomic contribution from potentially confounding factors such as diet and obesity.

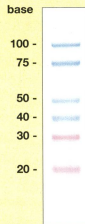
Beyond its contribution to our understanding of type 2 diabetes, this study introduced a novel approach — the application of traditional elements of GWAS to metagenomic data, and the introduction of MLGs to analyse the association of metagenomic variants with

a disease. This method will be applicable to a wide range of diseases or human traits that are likely to be influenced by the microbiome. The potential interactions between human genetic variation and metagenomic variation are staggeringly complex, and we are only beginning to understand how the human genotype influences the characteristics of its resident microbiota, and how, in turn, the microbiome can influence human health.

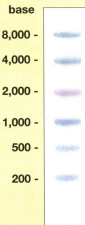
Finally, although MGWASs have great potential to account for some of the 'missing heritability' in diseases such as type 2 diabetes, this same concept also leads to questions about whether the microbiome, and its effect on human traits, is itself heritable. Infants inherit, or converge on, similar microbiota to that of their parents, through breast milk, physical contact and shared living. But the gut microbiome is also amazingly plastic, responding rapidly to such factors as dietary changes and antibiotic treatment. And so our growing understanding of the metagenome may in some cases further blur, rather than

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define, the boundaries between genetic and environmental influence on human traits and disease. ■

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ASTROPHYSICS

Two black holes found in a star cluster

The detection of two candidate black holes in a dense system of stars in the Milky Way suggests that a larger population of such objects might be lurking in this system. [SEE LETTER P.71](#)

STEFAN UMBREIT

The Milky Way globular cluster M22, a massive, dense star cluster containing close to a million stars, is starting to reveal its secrets. On page 71 of this issue, Strader *et al.*¹ present long-exposure radio images of M22, obtained by the Karl G. Jansky Very Large Array of radio antennas, showing two previously unknown sources of radio waves. The sources are candidates for 'stellar-mass' black holes, with masses 10–20 times that of the Sun. These are the first possible black holes to be detected in massive, old Milky Way star clusters such as M22. Furthermore, by virtue of the fact that two black holes were found, and were found in the cluster centre, the discovery provides insight into the dynamic evolution of the black-hole population.

Although the existence of black holes was predicted by theory almost a century ago², it was only in the past three decades that observational evidence became available. Because black holes are dark, the only way to detect them is through their gravitational influence on surrounding matter. In most cases, this requires that the black hole is in a binary system with another object that is either transferring mass to the black hole (accreting), at the same time emitting a large amount of energy as X-rays, or that it is bright enough to allow measurements of its radial velocity to be made.

In the present study, however, the main evidence for the interpretation of the two new sources as black holes comes from the relationship between the observed

radio emission and the X-ray emission. The radio emission from a black hole is usually attributed to radiation from jets of gas emanating from either side of a disk of gas, which is accreted from a companion star (Fig. 1). The X-ray emission results from strong shear in the inner part of the disk and from gas turbulence, which together heat the gas to such high temperatures that it releases X-rays.

Although many of the details of the connection between the gas jet and disk remain unclear, observations³ of accreting, stellar-mass black holes led to the determination of a relationship between the X-ray and radio

emissions, for low accretion rates. Thus, as X-ray luminosity decreases, the radio emission becomes increasingly dominant. Perhaps most importantly, observations⁴ as well as theoretical studies⁵ show that the radio-to-X-ray emission ratio increases with black-hole mass. This makes radio observations ideally suited to detect stellar-mass black holes⁶.

Strader *et al.* argue that the fact that the two new radio sources were not detected by the Chandra X-ray satellite places an upper limit on the sources' X-ray luminosity. When combined with their radio emission, this limit yields a large minimum radio-to-X-ray ratio, corresponding to stellar-mass black holes each with 10–20 solar masses. The interpretation of the sources as two black holes is compelling, not least because further support comes from, among other independent evidence, their location close to the cluster centre. In a 'self-gravitating' stellar system (in which all the individual components are held under the combined gravity of the object as a whole) which is in thermal equilibrium, the average distance of an object from the centre is a function of its mass, with more-massive objects lying farther in. Given that the core of M22 would have reached approximately thermal equilibrium in a relatively short time (0.3 billion years) compared with the cluster's age (12 billion years), the positions of the two sources can be used to determine the masses of the black holes. Using this approach, the authors deduced that the black holes are about 15 times more massive than the Sun — which is in accord with their previous calculation of 10–20 solar masses.

The detection of two accreting black holes in a globular cluster has implications for our understanding of the structure and dynamic evolution of dense stellar systems. First, there may be more than two black holes in M22, either as single entities or in binary systems in which mass accretion does not occur. Theoretical calculations⁷ of the formation of binary systems composed of a black hole and a white-dwarf star in globular clusters indicate that, over a period of 10 billion years, only 2–40% of the total retained black-hole population forms black-hole–white-dwarf

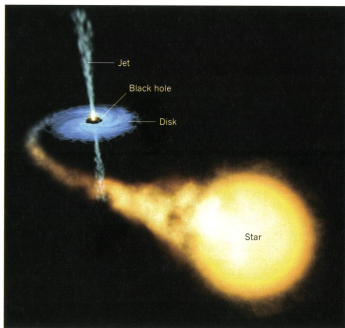


Figure 1 | Artist's impression of an accreting black hole. Strader *et al.*¹ detected two stellar-mass black-hole candidates in a Milky Way globular cluster by analysing the systems' radio and X-ray emissions. The radio emission is associated with a jet that emanates from both sides of a disk of gas, which is attracted to the black hole from a companion star. The X-ray emission is linked to the inner part of the disk.

F. MIRABEL (CEA & INST. ASTRON., SPACE PHYS.) / CONCEPT ARGENTINA / ESA / NASA

binaries that have observable gas accretion. Therefore, if the sources detected in M22 were in binaries with white dwarfs, M22 could contain as many as 100 black holes. Second, simulations of clusters that have a large population of stellar-mass black holes showed⁸ that the black-hole population leads to a substantial expansion of the cluster core. This is mainly caused by frequent ejections of the black holes from the core into the outer cluster regions by close gravitational encounters with other black holes. Strader *et al.* suggest that this expansion could explain why M22 has the fifth-largest core radius among bright Milky Way globular clusters.

Finally, and perhaps most significantly, Strader *et al.* point out that the discovery of two stellar-mass black holes in M22 challenges a hypothesis that has been held for decades — that the population of black holes disappears rapidly through gravitational interactions, such that only one, or a binary system of two, black holes remain at the typical age of globular clusters (10^{10} years)^{9–11}. This would be all the more important if the black holes detected in M22 were part of a large population; Strader and colleagues' results indicate that more black holes may be coupled to the cluster.

If many black holes are retained in globular clusters, we would expect an increased detection of gravitational waves from the merging of black-hole binaries. Although the interaction rate between black holes, and consequently the formation of black-hole–black-hole binaries, would be larger if the black holes were

decoupled from the cluster, the rate of destruction of potential black-hole binaries would likewise increase, leading overall to fewer merger events¹². Future gravitational-wave searches will allow this expectation to be tested, and the full impact of Strader and colleagues' findings to be revealed. ■

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50 Years Ago

La Vie par Jean Rostand et Andrée Tétty — Anyone glancing through this comprehensive, abundantly illustrated and well-produced volume could be forgiven for thinking life was very odd. Scarcely a page is passed that does not contain a picture of the abnormal, from the slightly unusual to the chimerical... It begins with morality and religion, passes to the consideration of the living cell and the latest knowledge on this important topic... and ends with some speculations on the future of the human race. One can but envy the authors their erudition — or the amount they must have learned in compiling the volume — and congratulate them on the fruits of their labours.

From *Nature* 6 October 1962

100 Years Ago

Satisfied with the maintenance of a specious standard of chemical purity, the public has acquiesced in the elevation of sky-scrappers and the sinking cavernous places of business. Many have thus become cave-dwellers, confined for most of their waking and sleeping hours in windless places, artificially lit, monotonously warmed. The sun is cut off by the shadow of tall buildings and by smoke — the sun, the energiser of the world, the giver of all things which bring joy to the heart of man, the fitting object of worship of our forefathers... Modern civilisation has withdrawn many of us from the struggle with the rigours of nature... I maintain that the bracing effect of cold is of supreme importance to health and happiness, that we become soft and flabby and less resistant to the attacks of infecting bacteria in the winter, not because of the cold, but because of our excessive precautions to preserve ourselves from cold.

From *Nature* 3 October 1912

IMMUNOLOGY

Tolerating pregnancy

The activity of specific suppressive immune cells, some of which persist to aid subsequent pregnancies, helps to explain how a pregnant female's immune system tolerates fetal antigens inherited from the father. **SEE LETTER P102**

ALEXANDER G. BETZ

Pregnancy poses a conundrum for the immune systems of placental mammals. A pregnant female's immune system has to defend both mother and fetus from pathogens, while at the same time tolerating the fetus, which contains antigens that the maternal immune system recognizes as foreign because they are the products of genes inherited from the father. On page 102 of this issue, Rowe *et al.* demonstrate that, during pregnancy, immune cells called regulatory T cells that recognize these paternal antigens proliferate in the mother and specifically suppress the maternal immune response against the fetus. Furthermore, the authors show that a pool of these cells remains long after delivery, facili-

tating tolerance in subsequent pregnancies. The description of this mechanism may, in the future, help to develop treatments for pre-eclampsia and prevent miscarriages resulting from immune rejection of the fetus².

Genetically, a fetus is half mother, half father. From an evolutionary perspective, maternal exposure to paternal antigens in the fetus is a relatively new problem: most animals lay eggs, so tolerance is not an issue. Yet physical attachment of the developing mammalian fetus to the mother's uterine wall by the placenta provides clear benefits — it allows gas exchange, nutrient uptake and waste disposal through the mother's blood circulation, providing optimal conditions for the growth of the developing fetus. A systemic immune suppression to facilitate this fetal 'implantation' would be much too

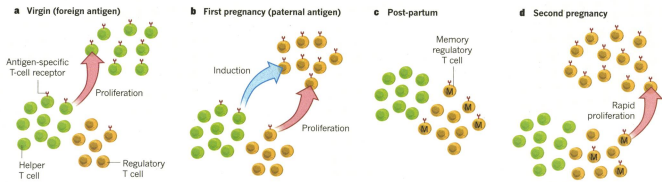


Figure 1 | Immune memory for a father's antigens. Rowe and colleagues¹ show that the mouse immune response to a foreign antigen differs radically depending on the context. **a**, In virgin mice, antigen-specific helper T cells proliferate in response to infection with *Listeria* bacteria expressing the antigen, despite the presence of a small number of regulatory T cells with matching antigen specificity (regulatory T cells are suppressive immune cells that dampen the responses of other immune cells). **b**, By contrast, when the same antigen is presented by the fetus during

pregnancy, antigen-specific regulatory T cells accumulate, as a result of both proliferation of existing regulatory T cells and the differentiation of regulatory T cells from helper T cells (induced regulatory T cells). **c**, **d**, Rowe and colleagues also show that a memory pool of these antigen-specific regulatory T cells persists long after delivery (**c**) and that, in subsequent pregnancies with the same father, these memory regulatory T cells rapidly proliferate and provide immune tolerance to the same fetal antigen (**d**).

risky because it would expose the mother and developing offspring to infection. So placental animals had to evolve a mechanism for localized and specific immune suppression.

Rowe and colleagues have helped to clarify this mechanism. It was previously known that the mother's immune system tolerates the fetus despite being fully aware of it³ and that a class of immune cell called regulatory T cells has a key role in this process⁴. Regulatory T cells act as suppressors of immune responses⁵; they are best known for their role in the prevention of autoimmune responses, but they are also involved in other functions, such as shutting down immune responses after successful elimination of a pathogen. These cells differentiate from precursor T cells in response to expression of just a single protein, Foxp3 (ref. 5), either in the thymus during T-cell development (thymic regulatory T cells) or in peripheral immune organs, such as the spleen or lymph nodes, during immune responses (induced regulatory T cells).

To assess how regulatory T cells promote immune tolerance of a fetus, Rowe *et al.* studied the fate of antigen-specific T cells responding to the antigen when encountering it either as a pathogen antigen or as a paternally derived antigen during pregnancy. When the authors infected mice with *Listeria* bacteria expressing the antigen, they observed antigen-specific 'helper' T cells proliferating — the expected immune response to a foreign antigen. But the immune response they saw in pregnant mice when the same antigen was expressed by the fetus was characterized by a substantial expansion in the number of maternal antigen-specific regulatory T cells (Fig. 1). This was the result of both proliferation of antigen-specific thymic regulatory T cells, and the conversion of antigen-specific helper T cells in peripheral

organs to regulatory T cells through the induction of Foxp3. The authors show that this immune suppression is highly antigen-specific, which explains why the pregnant female's ability to launch immune responses against infections is not affected.

These results demonstrate that the context of pregnancy can determine whether a foreign antigen is attacked or tolerated. The crucial role of regulatory T cells in this process provokes the question of whether these cells might have influenced the evolution of placental implantation of the fetus. Two recent comparative-genomics studies^{6,7} provide some clues. Although a *Foxp3*-like gene is present in fish, the protein it encodes lacks key domains required for the commitment of T cells to the regulatory lineage and for their function⁶. Intriguingly, it seems that *Foxp3* was lost from the genome of birds, but retained in mammals, in which it acquired additional functional domains⁷ and additional elements that regulate its expression⁸. *Foxp3* in monoterms (egg-laying mammals) contains most, if not all, of the functional domains⁷, which indicates that regulatory T cells evolved before the evolution of fetal implantation. Thus, it is tempting to speculate that the evolutionary gain of these cells facilitated the evolution of invasive placentalation, because it provided the maternal immune system with a mechanism to tolerate the fetus without unduly compromising its responsiveness to pathogens.

Intriguingly, Rowe *et al.* also show that the number of fetal-antigen-specific regulatory T cells persists at elevated levels long after delivery of the baby, and that the cells rapidly proliferate during subsequent pregnancies (Fig. 1). This is reminiscent of the regulatory T-cell 'memory' that is seen for some self-antigens and that helps to prevent autoimmunity⁹.

These fetus-specific memory cells might explain why pre-eclampsia (a condition associated with impaired maternal immune tolerance of the fetus) is predominantly a disease of the first pregnancy unless there is a change in father.

The generation of regulatory T-cell memory towards fetal antigens is part of a broader change in the immunological status quo that is triggered by pregnancy. For example, some autoimmune diseases, such as arthritis, are temporarily ameliorated, and regulatory T cells have been shown to be responsible for this beneficial effect⁹. Unfortunately, the diseases return with a vengeance after delivery and do not seem to benefit from the generation of protective regulatory T-cell memory. However, studies building on Rowe and colleagues' report of regulatory T-cell persistence following pregnancy may in the future help to harness elements of this process for the treatment of autoimmune disease. ■

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The oyster genome reveals stress adaptation and complexity of shell formation

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The Pacific oyster *Crassostrea gigas* belongs to one of the most species-rich but genomically poorly explored phyla, the Mollusca. Here we report the sequencing and assembly of the oyster genome using short reads and a fosmid-pooling strategy, along with transcriptomes of development and stress response and the proteome of the shell. The oyster genome is highly polymorphic and rich in repetitive sequences, with some transposable elements still actively shaping variation. Transcriptome studies reveal an extensive set of genes responding to environmental stress. The expansion of genes coding for heat shock protein 70 and inhibitors of apoptosis is probably central to the oyster's adaptation to sessile life in the highly stressful intertidal zone. Our analyses also show that shell formation in molluscs is more complex than currently understood and involves extensive participation of cells and their exosomes. The oyster genome sequence fills a void in our understanding of the Lophotrochozoa.

Oceans cover approximately 71% of the Earth's surface and harbour most of the phylum diversity of the animal kingdom. Understanding marine biodiversity and its evolution remains a major challenge. The Pacific oyster *C. gigas* (Thunberg, 1793) is a marine bivalve belonging to the phylum Mollusca, which contains the largest number of described marine animal species¹. Molluscs have vital roles in the functioning of marine, freshwater and terrestrial ecosystems, and have had major effects on humans, primarily as food sources but also as sources of dyes, decorative pearls and shells, vectors of parasites, and biofouling or destructive agents. Many molluscs are important fishery and aquaculture species, as well as models for studying neurobiology, biomineralization, ocean acidification and adaptation to coastal environments under climate change^{2,3}. As the most speciose member of the Lophotrochozoa, phylum Mollusca is central to our understanding of the biology and evolution of this superphylum of protostomes.

As sessile marine animals living in estuarine and intertidal regions, oysters must cope with harsh and dynamically changing environments. Abiotic factors such as temperature and salinity fluctuate wildly, and toxic metals and desiccation also pose serious challenges. Filter-feeding oysters face tremendous exposure to microbial pathogens. Oysters do have a notable physical line of defence against predation and desic-

cation in the formation of thick calcified shells, a key evolutionary innovation making molluscs a successful group. However, acidification of the world's oceans by uptake of anthropogenic carbon dioxide poses a potentially serious threat to this ancient adaptation⁴. Understanding biomineralization and molluscan shell formation is, thus, a major area of interest⁵. *Crassostrea gigas* is also an interesting model for developmental biology owing to its mosaic development with typical molluscan stages, including trochophore and veliger larvae and metamorphosis.

A complete genome sequence of *C. gigas* would enable a more thorough understanding of oyster biology and the evolution of Lophotrochozoa. One of the main challenges, however, is the high levels of polymorphism present in oysters and many marine invertebrates^{6–8}. To overcome this, an oyster derived from four generations of full-sibling mating (coefficient of inbreeding, $F = 0.59$) was used for genome sequencing and assembly (Supplementary Text B1) through fosmid pooling, next-generation sequencing (NGS) and hierarchical assembling. Combining these genomic data with transcriptomes from different organs, different developmental stages and adults challenged with stressors, in addition to mass spectrometric analysis of shell proteins, allowed us to explore characteristics of the oyster genome

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and key aspects of molluscan biology related to stress response and shell formation.

Sequencing and hierarchical assembly

NGS technology has been successfully applied for *de novo* genome sequencing and assembly using whole-genome shotgun strategies^{9–13}. We initially generated 155-fold Illumina whole-genome shotgun reads (Supplementary Table 1), but could not adequately assemble them owing to high levels of polymorphism and abundant repetitive sequences (Supplementary Text B2 and Supplementary Fig. 1). As possible alternative sequencing strategies—such as the addition of longer Roche 454 reads^{12,13} or traditional bacterial artificial chromosome (BAC)-to-BAC sequencing—are expensive, we opted instead for a more cost-effective fosmid-pooling strategy. In brief, a fosmid library was constructed, and 145,170 clones (~tenfold genome coverage) were evenly and randomly assigned into 1,613 pools, each of which was sequenced to ~60-fold depth and assembled separately (Fig. 1 and Supplementary Table 1). Contigs from each pool were merged into supercontigs, totalling 1,002 megabases (Mb) (Supplementary Text B4.1–3), which was larger than genome-size estimates of 637 Mb from flow cytometry or 545 Mb from *k*-mer (k-base fragment) analysis (Supplementary Text B1, 2, 3), owing to failure of some allelic variants to merge (Supplementary Figs 3 and 4). Self-to-self whole-genome alignment with LASTZ¹⁴ and sequencing depth information were used to remove redundancy in the assembly (Supplementary Text B4.4). The resulting 446 Mb of the assembly were retained for further scaffolding using paired-end data (Fig. 1). The final assembly comprised 559 Mb, with a contig N50 size (at which 50% of assembly was covered) of 19.4 kilobases (kb) and a scaffold N50 size of 401 kb (Supplementary Text B4.5 and Supplementary Table 3). Over 90% of the assembly was covered by the longest 1,670 (14%) scaffolds.

To assess the completeness of the assembly, 105-fold coverage of short-insert library reads (<2 kb) that participated in assembly (Supplementary Table 1) were aligned against the assembly. Over 99% of these reads were successfully mapped, using a combination

of Burrows–Wheeler Aligners¹⁵ and the more sensitive LASTZ (Supplementary Fig. 5 and Supplementary Table 4). The integrity of the assembly is further demonstrated by the successful mapping of 99% of the BAC sequencing obtained using the Sanger sequencing technique, and 98% of ~68,000 expressed sequence tags from 454 sequencing (Supplementary Text B5, Supplementary Fig. 6 and Supplementary Tables 5 and 6). Fosmid pooling has been used for re-sequencing^{16,17}, and our results show that the combination of fosmid pooling, NGS and hierarchical assembly provides a new, cost-effective alternative for *de novo* sequencing and assembly of complex genomes.

Polymorphism and repetitive sequences

To understand polymorphism in the assembled genome (inbred) and one re-sequenced wild oyster (wild) (Supplementary Text C1). The inbred genome contained 3.1 million single-nucleotide polymorphisms and 258,405 short insertion/deletion (indels, 1–40 base pairs (bp)) yielding a sequence polymorphism rate of 0.73%, whereas the wild genome had 3.8 million single-nucleotide polymorphisms and 238,182 indels, or a polymorphism rate of 1.3% (Supplementary Table 7), comparable to previous estimates¹⁸. This 44% reduction in polymorphism in the inbred genome is smaller than the 59.4% predicted from four generations of brother–sister mating, indicating that selection favouring heterozygotes had occurred¹⁹. The polymorphism combining inbred and wild (among four haplotypes) was 2.3%, higher than that in most studied animal genomes^{20,21} but comparable to that in known high-polymorphism species²². In inbred and wild, we found 3,094 short indels located in coding regions inferred to cause frameshift variants in 2,665 genes, providing an important source for recessive lethal mutations.

k-mer-based analysis of the oyster genome showed that ~35% of 17-mers had at least two identical copies in the genome, suggesting an abundance of repetitive sequences (Supplementary Fig. 1). Similarly, homology searching and *ab initio* prediction found 202 Mb (36% of the genome) in repetitive sequences (Supplementary Text C2 and Supplementary Table 8). Over 62% of the detected repeats could not be assigned to known categories, reflecting the paucity of genomic information from molluscs²³. Large numbers of transposase (359) and reverse-transcriptase (779) gene fragments were detected; over 96% of these had detectable transcripts (Supplementary Fig. 8). Alignment of the wild sequence against the assembly identified 20,605 deletions (>100 bp), over 80% of which overlapped with detected transposable elements, suggesting that transposable elements may have an active role in shaping genome variation. Using MITE-hunter²⁴, we detected 157,007 copies of miniature inverted-repeat transposable elements (MITEs), accounting for a remarkable 8.82% of the genome (Supplementary Text C2.3 and Supplementary Table 9). Pair-wise comparisons show extremely low sequence divergence in some MITE families (Supplementary Fig. 9), indicating that they may still be active.

Gene annotation and developmental genomics

A total of 28,027 genes were predicted encoding 50 amino acids or more by combining *de novo* prediction and evidence-based searches using reference genomes, oyster expressed sequence tags and transcripts from multiple organs and developmental stages (Supplementary Text D1 and E1 and Supplementary Fig. 11), with 96.1% showing expression (reads per kb per million mapped reads (RPKM) > 1 in at least one transcriptome; Supplementary Text D2). Of the inferred proteins, 21,085 matched entries in the SWISS-PROT, InterPro or TrEMBL databases. These genes plus their transcriptome profile from 7 adult organs and at 38 developmental stages provide valuable resources for comparative genomics analysis (Supplementary Text E2 and 3), functional inference and studies on development and organogenesis (Supplementary Text F2 and Supplementary Fig. 15).

One notable finding of developmental interest is that the oyster Hox gene cluster is broken into four sections (Fig. 2) with flanking non-Hox genes (Supplementary Fig. 16). We did not find a clear

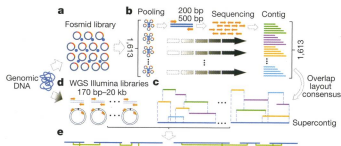


Figure 1 | Fosmid-pooling strategy for oyster genome assembly. Genomic DNA was randomly sheared into fragments. **a**, A 40-kb-insert fosmid library was constructed (**a**), and 145,170 fosmid clones were randomly selected and assigned into 1,613 pools, each containing 90 clones covering 0.57% of the diploid genome (**b**). For each pool, three Illumina short-insert barcoded libraries (two 200 bp and one 500 bp) were constructed and ~60-fold coverage of 90-bp reads (20-fold per library) were generated, and assembled using SOAPdenovo with optimizing parameters. Assemblies from each pool were further corrected and reassembled if unexpected connections were detected owing to high similarity sequences from different fosmids, and gaps were filled by local assembly. **c**, Fosmid scaffolds were split into contigs at unfilled regions, leaving no undetermined bases in the sequences. Each base was assigned a Phred-like quality score determined by its coverage and alignment mismatches, and these sequences were merged into supercontigs using the overlap layout consensus method. Redundancy was removed using self-to-self alignment and sequencing depth information. **d**, Whole-genome shotgun Illumina libraries (200-bp to 20-kb inserts) from sheared genomic DNA were constructed for mated-pair Illumina sequencing. **e**, The fosmid supercontigs were linked into scaffolds using (1) the whole-genome shotgun sequences; (2) inferred paired-end information extracted from assembled pool scaffolds with a span size ranging from 50 bp to 37.5 kb; and (3) 225,000 fosmid ends sequenced using Sanger technology.

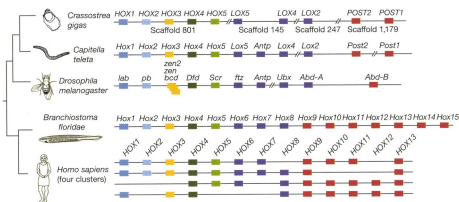


Figure 2 | Clustering of Hox genes in Pacific oyster *Crassostrea gigas*, polychaete annelid *Capitella teleta*, fruitfly *Drosophila melanogaster*, lancelet *Branchiostoma floridae* and *Homo sapiens*. Oblique lines indicate

Antennapedia gene, which is present in other bivalves such as *Pecten* and *Yoldia*²⁴ (Supplementary Fig. 17). Disruption of the Hox cluster, as also observed in tunicates, nematodes and drosophilids, has been attributed to the loss of temporal co-linearity and modified developmental control²⁵. Supporting this model, we find that Hox genes in the oyster are not activated in an order matching their identity or genomic position, with, for example, *HOX4* and *HOX1* peaking before gastrulation, *LOX5* and *POST2* during the trochophore stage and *HOX5* during the pediveliger stage (Supplementary Fig. 18 and Supplementary Table 15).

Adaptation to environmental stress

Comparison with seven other sequenced genomes identified 8,654 oyster-specific genes (Supplementary Text E3.1) that are probably important in the evolution and adaptation of oysters and other molluscs. With oysters being the only representative, these genes could be shared by other molluscs. Among these genes, gene ontology terms related to 'protein binding', 'apoptosis', 'cytokine activity'

regions of Hox cluster that are non-contiguous or interrupted. Blue denotes anterior Hox genes, yellow denotes paralog group 3 Hox genes, green and purple denote central Hox genes and red denotes posterior Hox genes.

and 'inflammatory response' are highly enriched ($P < 0.0001$; Supplementary Text E2 and Supplementary Table 17), indicating over-representation of some host-defence genes against biotic and abiotic stress. Manual examination shows that several gene families related to defence pathways, including protein folding, oxidation and anti-oxidation, apoptosis and immune responses, are expanded in *C. gigas* (Fig. 3a and Supplementary Table 18). The oyster genome contains 88 heat shock protein 70 (HSP70) genes, which have crucial roles in protecting cells against heat and other stresses, compared with ~17 in humans and 39 in sea urchins. Phylogenetic analysis finds clustering of 71 oyster HSP70 genes to themselves, suggesting that the expansion is specific to the oyster (Supplementary Fig. 19). Also expanded are cytochrome P450 (Supplementary Fig. 20) and multi-copper oxidase gene families, which are important in the biotransformation of endobiotic and xenobiotic chemicals²⁶, and extracellular superoxide dismutases, which are important in defence against oxidative stress. The oyster genome has 48 genes coding for inhibitor of apoptosis proteins (IAPs), compared with 8 in humans and 7 in sea urchins,

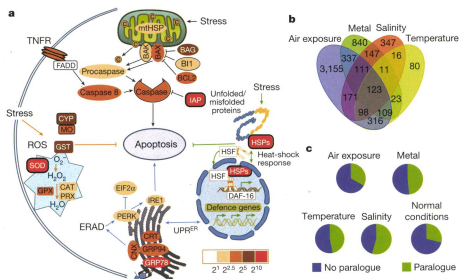


Figure 3 | Expansion, expression and pathway distribution of defence-related genes in *Crassostrea gigas*. a, Expansion and expression of key genes in major stress-response pathways in *C. gigas*. Genes include HSPs and HSF in the heat-shock response; *GRP78*, *CRT*, *CXN*, *GRP94*, *PERK*, *IRE1* and *EIF2a* in the endoplasmic reticulum unfolded-protein response (UPR^{ER}); IAPs, *BCL2* like, *BAG*, *B11*, caspases, *FADD* and *TNFR* in apoptotic pathways; *CYP450* and *MO* in oxidation; and *SOD*, *GPX*, *PRX* and *CAT* in anti-oxidation. Boxes with bold black borders indicate gene families (HSPs, IAPs and SODs) expanded in *C. gigas*, and the filled colours correspond to their degree of upregulation in $\text{RPKM}_{\text{treatment}}/\text{RPKM}_{\text{control}}$ by stress, found in 61 transcriptomes from oysters

challenged with 9 types of stressors (Supplementary Text G2 and Supplementary Table 23). b, Venn diagram of common and unique genes expressed in response to temperature, salinity, air exposure and heavy-metal stress (zinc, cadmium, copper, lead and mercury), showing overlap of responses. c, Number of genes with and without detectable paralogs differentially expressed under stress and normal conditions, showing that genes responding to stress are more likely to have paralogs ($P < 1 \times 10^{-10}$, χ^2 test). Green sections of the pie chart represent 1,442, 809, 358, 550 and 7,938 paralogs for air exposure, metal, temperature, salinity and normal conditions, respectively.

indicating a powerful anti-apoptosis system in oysters. Genes encoding lectin-like proteins, including C-type lectin, fibrinogen-related proteins and C1q domain-containing proteins (C1QDCs), are highly over-represented in the oyster genome ($P < 0.0001$; Supplementary Table 18); these genes have important roles in the innate immune response in invertebrates^{27–29}. Interestingly, many immune-related genes, including genes coding for Gram-negative bacteria-binding proteins, peptidoglycan-recognition proteins, defensins, C-type-lectin-domain-containing proteins and C1QDCs, are highly expressed in the digestive gland (Supplementary Fig. 21), indicating that the digestive system of this filter feeder is an important first-line defence organ against pathogens.

To investigate genome-wide responses to stress, we sequenced 61 transcriptomes from *C. gigas* subjected to nine stressors, including temperature, salinity, air exposure and heavy metals (Supplementary Text G1 and Supplementary Tables 19 and 20). We found that 5,844 genes were differentially expressed under at least one stressor, and genes responding to different stressors showed significant overlap (Fig. 3b and Supplementary Fig. 23a). Air exposure induced a response from the largest number of genes (4,420), indicating that air exposure is a major stressor and that oysters have evolved an extensive gene set in defence. Genes differentially expressed in response to stress are more likely to have paralogues (Fig. 3c), suggesting that expansion and selective retention of duplicated defence-related genes are probably important to oyster adaptation. Under most stressors, genes coding for HSPs, histones, IAPs and protein biogenesis were upregulated, and those for protein degradation downregulated, pointing to concerted responses to maintain cellular homeostasis³⁰ (Supplementary Text G3 and Supplementary Table 21). Genes involved in the unfolded protein response to cellular stress in the endoplasmic reticulum (coding for calreticulin, calnexin, 78- and 94-kDa glucose-regulated proteins) were upregulated, indicating that protein quality control is critical in cellular homeostasis under stress.

Air exposure induced up to 67-fold upregulation of five highly expressed IAPs (Supplementary Fig. 24a). Other inhibitors of apoptosis were also upregulated: *BCL2* up to fourfold and *BAG* up to 12-fold (Supplementary Fig. 24b). These apoptosis inhibitors were also highly upregulated under heat and low salinity stress. These findings, along with the expansion of IAPs, suggest that a powerful anti-apoptosis system exists and may be critical for the amazing endurance of oysters to air exposure and other stresses. The existence of an intrinsic apoptosis pathway in invertebrates has been controversial, and parts of the pathways have only recently been demonstrated for two lophotrochozoans^{31,32}. The finding of key genes belonging to both intrinsic (*BAX*, *BAK*, *BAG*, *BCL2*, *BII* and procaspase) and extrinsic (*TNFR* and caspase 8) apoptosis pathways indicates that oysters have advanced apoptosis systems. Powerful inhibition of apoptosis as shown by genomic and transcriptomic analyses may be central to the ability of oysters to tolerate prolonged air exposure and other stresses.

Heat stress induced a ~2,000-fold increase in expression of five highly inducible *HSP70* genes or a 13.9-fold increase in average expression of all *HSP70* genes, amounting to 4.2% of all transcripts (Supplementary Figs 24c and 25). The genomic expansion and massive upregulation of HSP genes help to explain why *C. gigas* can tolerate temperatures as high as 49 °C when exposed to summer sun at low tide³³. HSP genes were also upregulated under other stressors and may be central to the oyster defence against all stresses (Supplementary Fig. 25). HSP genes may also inhibit apoptosis by binding to effector caspases³⁴.

Genes involved in signal transduction, including genes coding for G-protein-coupled receptors and Ras GTPase, were also activated by stressors (Supplementary Fig. 24f) and over-represented in the oyster genome (Supplementary Table 11). These regulators may have a role in orchestrating stress responses, which seem to be well coordinated (Fig. 3a and Supplementary Fig. 25). The expansion of key defence genes and the strong, complex transcriptomic response to

stress highlight the sophisticated genomic adaptations of the oyster to sessile life in a highly stressful environment.

Shell formation

Calcified shells provide critical protection against predation and desiccation in sessile marine animals such as oysters. Molluscan shells consist of calcium carbonate (CaCO_3) crystals of either aragonite or calcite embedded in an elaborate organic matrix. Two models have been advanced for molluscan shell formation. The matrix model posits that mineralization occurs in a mantle-secreted matrix of chitin, silk fibroin and acidic proteins^{35,36}. Chitin and silk proteins are proposed to provide matrix structure, whereas acidic proteins control the nucleation and growth of CaCO_3 crystals. The cellular model suggests that biomineralization is cell-mediated; that is, crystals are formed in haemocytes and then deposited at the mineralization front³⁷.

We searched the oyster genome for genes implicated in shell formation in previous studies and examined their expression in different tissues and at different stages (Supplementary Text H1, 2). We also sequenced peptides from shells, mapped them to the genome and identified 259 shell proteins (Supplementary Text H3 and Supplementary Table 24). Although our search found evidence for the involvement of chitin, we did not find any silk-like proteins encoded in the oyster genome (Supplementary Text H2) but found, instead, many diverse proteins that may have roles in matrix construction and modification. Notably, a gene coding for a fibronectin-like protein was highly expressed at the early developmental stage, when larval shells are formed, in unison with chitin synthase (Fig. 4a) and was mostly expressed in the adult mantle (40× other organ average; Fig. 4b); the fibronectin-like protein was among the most abundant proteins found in oyster shells. Genes coding for laminin and some collagen proteins were also highly expressed in the mantle (Supplementary Fig. 27a) and found in shells. These are typical extracellular matrix (ECM) proteins, and their presence in shells suggests that the shell matrix has similarities to the ECM of animal connective tissues and basal lamina. Unlike silk fibroins that can self assemble³⁸, the formation of fibronectin fibrils in the ECM is cell mediated³⁹. Oyster fibronectin-like proteins have five type-III domains for integrin binding and cell adhesion. Genes coding for integrins were highly expressed in haemocytes (4× other organ average, Supplementary Fig. 27b). Thus, haemocytes may organize fibronectin-like fibril formation in the shell matrix as they do in ECM.

The involvement of cells in shell formation is further supported by the functional diversity of proteins detected in shells. Many house-keeping proteins, such as elongation factor 1 α and ribosomal proteins, were found in the shell; indeed, most oyster shell proteins are not structural proteins but are distributed in diverse metabolic pathways (Fig. 4c and Supplementary Table 25). This functional diversity of shell proteins mirrors that of cells, which is unexpected under the matrix model. Furthermore, 84% of the 259 shell proteins identified are not classical secreted proteins (Supplementary Text H3.4 and Supplementary Table 24); they may be part of cells or deposited by exosomes⁴⁰. Supporting the presence of exosomes, 61 of the 259 shell proteins matched proteins in the exosome database⁴¹. Cells and exosome-like vesicles containing calcite crystals have been observed at the mineralization front^{37,42}, although their significance in shell formation is debated. This study provides molecular evidence for their presence inside shells and their probable participation in shell formation.

Many shell proteins are enzymes that may be involved in matrix construction or modification. A homologue of penicillin-binding protein is exclusively expressed in mantle (72× other organ average) and highly abundant in shells (Supplementary Fig. 27d). Penicillin-binding protein is a transpeptidase that crosslinks glycopeptides in bacterial cell walls⁴³ and may have similar functions in the shell matrix. Another notable enzyme found is tyrosinase. The oyster

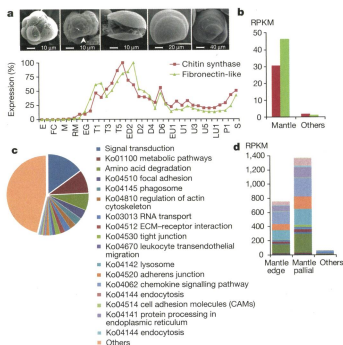


Figure 4 | Genes related to shell formation identified from mass spectrometry analysis of shell proteins and transcriptome data. **a**, Relative expression (y axis) of genes coding for chitin synthase (gene CGL_10009438) and fibronectin-like (CGL_10016964) in early development corresponds to the formation of shell gland and first larval shells, as seen in scanning electron microscope photos. White arrow denotes the invagination that forms the shell gland. Developmental stages (x axis) and their timeline are defined in Supplementary Table 12. **b**, In adults, chitin synthase and fibronectin-like proteins (same colour as in **a**) are almost exclusively expressed in the mantle compared with other organs. Fibronectin-like is also one of the most abundant proteins found in the shell. **c**, Distribution of shell proteins in diverse Kyoto encyclopedia of genes and genomes (KEGG) pathways indicative of general cellular functions. **d**, Expression of 26 tyrosinase genes in the mantle edge, mantle pallial and other organs. Tyrosinases are abundant in shells and their higher expression in the non-pigmented mantle pallial indicate that their functions are not limited to melanogenesis but are related to shell formation.

genome has an expanded set of 26 genes coding for tyrosinase, compared with one in *Caenorhabditis elegans* and two in humans; most genes coding for tyrosinase are mantle specific (Fig. 4d) and highly enriched among shell proteins ($P = 8 \times 10^{-6}$). Although tyrosinase is a key enzyme in melanogenesis^{44,45}, it is most highly expressed in the non-pigmented pallial mantle (Fig. 4d), indicating that it has other functions in the oyster. The mantle secretes tyrosine-rich proteins⁴⁶, and oxidation of tyrosine may be essential for shell matrix maturation. Several proteinases and proteinase inhibitors are highly mantle specific and abundant in shells, and may be involved in matrix formation, modification and protection (Supplementary Table 24). Together, these results indicate that oyster shell matrix is not formed simply by self-assembling silk-like proteins but by diverse proteins through complex assembly and modification processes that may involve haemocytes and exosomes.

Concluding remarks

We sequenced and assembled the genome of the Pacific oyster using an inbred individual, short-read NGS and a new fosmid-pooling and hierarchical assembly strategy. The draft assembly provided insight into a molluscan genome characterized by high polymorphism, abundant repetitive sequences and active transposable elements. Genomic, transcriptomic and proteomic analyses show unique adaptations of oysters to sessile life in a highly stressful intertidal environment and the complexity of shell formation. The oyster

genome sequence and comprehensive transcriptome data provide valuable resources for studying molluscan biology and lophotrochozoan evolution, and for genetic improvement of oysters and other important aquaculture species.

METHODS SUMMARY

The sequenced Pacific oyster is an inbred female produced by four generations of brother–sister mating. Genome sequences were produced with Illumina platform using fosmid pooling and assembled with a new hierarchical assembly strategy. Fosmid ends were sequenced by Sanger. Gene models were obtained by integrating results of *de novo* gene prediction and alignment-based methods based on homology and transcriptomic evidence. Transcriptomes were sequenced with Illumina platform. The proteome of the shell was obtained by mass spectrometry. All methods are described in detail in the Supplementary Information.

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- Author Contributions** G.Z. and X.G. conceived the study and designed scientific objectives. G.Z., Jun W. and X.G. led the project and manuscript preparation. Jun W., X.F. and Y.Y. developed the sequencing strategy. L. Li and X.F. managed the project. R.L. (leader), Y.L., Z.H., Y.L., X.S., B.L., X.J., W.F., Q.M., H.Y., L. Luo, B. Wang, Y.M. and P.N. conducted assembly and evaluation; R.L. (leader), P.Y., Z.Q., Y.X., Y.B., Y.C., C.P., Y.F., D.F., L.Y., Z.P., N. Li, X.W., M.C., L.C., S.Z., J.Y.W., Ning L., G.J. and Y.L. performed genome annotation and data analysis; L. Li, F.X., H.Y., F.W., S.D., J.P.W., J.Z., Q.W. and L.Q. cultured oysters and provided materials; H.Q. (leader), L. Li, J.W., Z.S. and H.W. performed polymorphism analysis and validation; F.X. (leader), P.W.H.H., J.P., T.D.L., P.Y., J. Liu, X.W., L. Li, N.Z., J. Li, W.W., Y.L., M.Y. and W.H. conducted developmental biology studies and data analysis; L.Z. (leader), X.G., J.M., Q.H., Y.D., C.E.W.S., P.C., B.H., T.Q. and G.M. conducted stress studies and data analysis; X.W. (leader), X.G., T.W., Z. Xu, Y.H., A.M., X.S., R.H., B. Wen, F.T. and Y.Z. conducted shell-formation studies and data analysis. Hm.Y. and Jian W. supervised sequencing, assembly and bioinformatics analysis. X.G., S.W. and F.X. performed flow-cytometry analysis. D.H. and P.M.G. provided inbred oysters, BAC sequences and advice. L.Q. and X.L. participated in discussions and provided suggestions. X.G., X.F., L. Li, R.L., F.X., P.Y., L.Z., X.W., H.Q. and P.W.H.H. did most of the writing with contributions from all authors.
- Author Information** The oyster genome project has been deposited at DDBJ/EMBL/GenBank under the accession number AFT100000000. All short-read data have been deposited into the Sequence Read Archive (SRA) (<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/sra>) under the accession number SRA040229. Short-read data re-sequencing have been deposited in the SRA under the accession number SRA043580. Raw sequencing data of transcriptomes have been deposited in the Gene Expression Omnibus under the accession number GSE31012. Genomic data are also available at the Comprehensive Library for Modern Biotechnology (CLMB) repository: doi:10.5524/100030 (ref. 47). Reprints and permissions information is available at www.nature.com/reprints. This paper is distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-Non-Commercial-Share Alike licence, and the online version of the paper is freely available to all readers. The authors declare no competing financial interests. Readers are welcome to comment on the online version of the paper. Correspondence and requests for materials should be addressed to Jun W. (wang@genomics.org.cn), X.G. (gzhang@hrsl.rutgers.edu), Y.Y. (yinye@genomics.org.cn) or G.Z. (gzhang@qdio.ac.cn).

A metagenome-wide association study of gut microbiota in type 2 diabetes

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Assessment and characterization of gut microbiota has become a major research area in human disease, including type 2 diabetes, the most prevalent endocrine disease worldwide. To carry out analysis on gut microbial content in patients with type 2 diabetes, we developed a protocol for a metagenome-wide association study (MGWAS) and undertook a two-stage MGWAS based on deep shotgun sequencing of the gut microbial DNA from 345 Chinese individuals. We identified and validated approximately 60,000 type-2-diabetes-associated markers and established the concept of a metagenomic linkage group, enabling taxonomic species-level analyses. MGWAS analysis showed that patients with type 2 diabetes were characterized by a moderate degree of gut microbial dysbiosis, a decrease in the abundance of some universal butyrate-producing bacteria and an increase in various opportunistic pathogens, as well as an enrichment of other microbial functions conferring sulphate reduction and oxidative stress resistance. An analysis of 23 additional individuals demonstrated that these gut microbial markers might be useful for classifying type 2 diabetes.

Type 2 diabetes (T2D), which is a complex disorder influenced by both genetic and environmental components, has become a major public health issue throughout the world^{1,2}. Currently, research to parse the underlying genetic contributors to T2D is mainly through the use of genome-wide association studies (GWAS) focusing on identifying genetic components in the organism's genome^{3,4}. Recently, research has indicated that the risk of developing T2D may also involve factors from the 'other genome', that is, the 'intestinal microbiome' (also termed the gut metagenome)⁵.

Previous metagenomic research on the gut metagenome, primarily using 16S ribosomal RNA⁶ and whole-genome shotgun (WGS) sequencing⁷, has provided an overall picture of commensal microbial communities and their functional repertoire. For example, a catalogue of 3.3 million human gut microbial genes were established in 2010 (ref. 8) and, of note, a more extensive catalogue of gut microorganisms and their genes were published later¹⁰. Recent research on the gut metagenome has changed our understanding of human disease and its potential medical impact as many studies have reported. From the perspective of both taxonomic and functional composition, the gut microbiota might be linked to and contribute to many complex diseases¹¹. For example, several studies have indicated that obesity is associated with an increase in the phylum Firmicutes and a relatively lower abundance of the phylum Bacteroidetes^{7,12–16}. Crohn's disease research has revealed that patients had a significant reduction in the overall diversity of the gut microbiota¹⁷ and had changes in

microbial composition¹⁸, and a T2D study showed that the proportion of the phylum Firmicutes and the class Clostridia in the gut of patients was significantly reduced¹⁹. However, more work is required to gain detailed information about gut microbial compositional changes and their associated impact with these types of diseases, and additional tools are required to find ways to determine associated changes easily and rapidly.

To reach these initial goals, we devised and carried out a two-stage case-control metagenome-wide association study (MGWAS) based on deep next-generation shotgun sequencing of DNA extracted from the stool samples from a total of 345 Chinese T2D patients and non-diabetic controls. From this we pinpointed specific genetic and functional components of the gut metagenome associated with T2D (Supplementary Fig. 1). Our data provide insight into the characteristics of the gut metagenome related to T2D risk, a paradigm for future studies of the pathophysiological role of the gut metagenome in other relevant disorders, and the potential usefulness for a gut-microbiota-based approach for assessment of individuals at risk of such disorders.

Construction of a gut metagenome reference

To identify metagenomic markers associated with T2D, we first developed a comprehensive metagenome reference gene set that included genetic information from Chinese individuals and T2D-specific gut microbiota, as the currently available metagenomic reference (the MetaHIT gene catalogue) did not include such data. We

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carried out WGS sequencing on individual faecal DNA samples from 145 Chinese individuals (71 cases and 74 controls, Supplementary Table 1) and obtained an average of 2.61 gigabases (Gb) (15.8 million) paired-end reads for each, totalling 378.4 Gb of high-quality data that was free of human DNA and adaptor contaminants (Supplementary Table 2). We then performed *de novo* assembly and metagenomic gene prediction for all 145 samples. We integrated these data with the MetaHIT gene catalogue, which contained 3.3 million genes that were predicted from the gut metagenomes of individuals of European descent, and obtained an updated gene catalogue with 4,267,985 predicted genes. A total of 1,090,889 of these genes were uniquely assembled from our Chinese samples, which contributed 10.8% additional coverage of sequencing reads when comparing our data against that from the MetaHIT gene catalogue alone (Supplementary Fig. 2).

Having a more complete gene reference, we carried out taxonomic assignment and functional annotation for the updated gene catalogue using 2,890 reference genomes (IMG v3.4; Supplementary Table 3), KEGG (Release 59.0) and eggNOG databases (v3). Here, 21.3% of the genes in the updated catalogue could be robustly assigned to a genus, which covered 26.4%–90.6% (61.2% on average) of the sequencing reads in the 145 samples (Supplementary Methods); the remaining genes were likely to be from currently undefined microbial species. For assessment at a functional level, we identified 6,313 KEGG orthologues and 38,641 eggNOG orthologue groups in the updated gene catalogue, which covered 47.1% and 60.9%, respectively, of the genes in the catalogue. In addition, 14.0% of genes that were not mapped to eggNOG orthologue groups could be clustered into 7,042 novel gene families; however, these do not yet have any functional annotation information, but were still included (as in-house eggNOG orthologue groups) in our analyses. For each metagenomic sample, on average, 48.7% and 68.8% sequencing reads were covered, respectively, by these KEGG orthologues- and eggNOG orthologue groups-annotated genes.

Marker identification using a two-stage MGWAS

To define T2D-associated metagenomic markers, we devised and carried out a two-stage MGWAS strategy. Using a sequence-based profiling method, we quantified the gut microbiota in the 145 samples for use in stage I. On average, with the requirement that there should be $\geq 90\%$ identity, we could uniquely map $77.4 \pm 0.6\%$ (mean $\pm$ s.e.m.; $n = 145$) paired-end reads to the updated gene catalogue (Supplementary Fig. 2 and Supplementary Table 2). To normalize the sequencing coverage, we used relative abundance instead of the raw read count to quantify the gut microbial genes (Supplementary Methods). With nearly 16 million sequencing reads on average per sample, our sequence-based profiling method could reliably detect very low-abundance genes. For example, given a gene with a real relative abundance of 1×10^{-6} , the detected value ranged from 0.7×10^{-6} to 1.5×10^{-6} based on a theoretical estimation (Supplementary Fig. 3). To facilitate the subsequent statistical analyses at both genetic and functional levels, we further defined and prepared three types of profiles using the quantified gene results: (1) a gene profile; (2) a KEGG orthologues profile; and (3) an eggNOG orthologue groups profile (Supplementary Methods).

We investigated the subpopulations of the 145 samples in these different profiles. Applying the same identification method as used in the MetaHIT study²⁰, we identified three enterotypes in our Chinese samples (Supplementary Figs 4 and 5). A principal component analysis (PCA) showed that these three enterotypes were primarily made up of several highly abundant genera, including *Bacteroides*, *Prevotella*, *Bifidobacterium* and *Ruminococcus* (Fig. 1a). However, we found no significant relationship between enterotype and T2D disease status ($P = 0.29$, Fisher's exact test). We examined the top five principal components (P value in Tracy–Widom test < 0.05 and contribution $> 3\%$): the first and second principal components were significantly correlated with enterotype ($P < 0.001$, Kruskal–Wallis test), and the fifth principal component was significantly correlated with

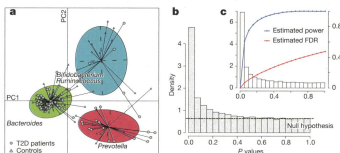


Figure 1 | Identification of T2D-associated markers from gut metagenome. **a**, The T2D patients ($n = 71$) and controls ($n = 74$) from stage I were plotted on the first two principal components of the genus profile. Lines connect individuals determined to have the same enterotype (using the PAM clustering method of refs 20,36), and coloured circles cover the individuals near the centre of gravity for each cluster ($< 1.5\sigma$). The top four genera as the main contributors to these clusters were determined and plotted by their loadings in these two components. **b**, Density histogram showing the P -value distribution of all genes tested in stage I. The horizontal line represents the distribution of P values under the null hypothesis. **c**, Density histogram showing the P -value distribution of genes in stage II, which were identified from stage I. The blue and red curves denote the estimated statistical power and false discovery rate (FDR), respectively, for a particular P value.

T2D ($P < 0.001$, Wilcoxon rank-sum test; Supplementary Fig. 5d), indicating that T2D, in addition to enterotype, was a determining factor in explaining the gut microbial differences in our samples. The third and fourth principal components, however, did not correlate with any known factors.

We then corrected for population stratification, which might be related to the non-T2D-related factors. For this we analysed our data using a modified EIGENSTRAT method²¹; however, unlike what is done in a GWAS subpopulation correction, we applied this analysis to microbial abundance rather than to genotype. For gene profile, after adjustment, we found that the effects that correlated with non-T2D-related factors disappeared (Supplementary Table 4). A Wilcoxon rank-sum test was done on the adjusted gene profile to identify differential metagenomic gene content between the T2D patients and controls. The outcome of our analyses showed a substantial enrichment of a set of microbial genes that had very small P values, as compared with the expected distribution under the null hypothesis (Fig. 1b), indicating that these genes were true T2D-associated gut microbial genes.

To validate the significant associations identified in stage I, we carried out the stage II analysis using an additional 200 Chinese individuals (one of these samples had a very low within-sample diversity, which was probably owing to the presence of a high fraction of *Escherichia* and *Klebsiella*, and was therefore excluded in later analyses; Supplementary Tables 1 and 2). We also used WGS sequencing in stage II and generated a total of 830.8 Gb sequence data with 23.6 million paired-end reads on average per sample. We then assessed the 278,167 stage I genes that had P values < 0.05 and found that the majority of these genes still correlated with T2D in these stage II study samples (Supplementary Fig. 6). We next controlled for the false discovery rate (FDR) in the stage II analysis, and defined a total of 52,484 T2D-associated gene markers from these genes corresponding to a FDR of 2.5% (stage II P value < 0.01 ; Fig. 1c, Supplementary Fig. 7 and Supplementary Table 5).

We applied the same two-stage analysis using the KEGG orthologues and eggNOG orthologue groups profiles and identified a total of 1,345 KEGG orthologues markers (stage II $P < 0.05$ and 4.5% FDR) and 5,612 eggNOG orthologue groups markers (stage II $P < 0.05$ and 6.6% FDR) that were associated with T2D (Supplementary Tables 6 and 7).

Development of a metagenomic linkage group

To reduce and structurally organize the abundant metagenomic data and to enable us to make a taxonomic description, we devised the

generalized concept of metagenomic linkage group (MLG) in lieu of a species concept for a metagenome. Here a MLG is defined as a group of genetic material in a metagenome that is probably physically linked as a unit rather than being independently distributed; this allowed us to avoid the need to completely determine the specific microbial species present in the metagenome, which is important given there are a large number of unknown organisms and that there is frequent lateral gene transfer (LGT) between bacteria. Using our gene profile, we defined and identified a MLG as a group of genes that co-exists among different individual samples and has a consistent abundance level and taxonomic assignment (Supplementary Methods).

To assess the reliability of our MLG identifying method, we first constructed a subset of bacterial genes from the updated metagenome gene catalogue ($n = 130,605$) that were independently derived from 50 known gut bacterial species (Supplementary Methods). We used a threshold for the minimum gene number for a MLG of 100, above which all 50 bacterial species could be identified with an average genome coverage of 83.0% and with an accuracy in the taxonomic classification of genes in the constructed subset of 99.8% (Supplementary Fig. 8 and Supplementary Table 8).

We identified 47 MLGs in the T2D-associated gene markers, which covered 84.4% of these markers (Supplementary Table 9). Of these, 17 MLGs could be assigned to known bacterial species on the basis of strong alignment sequence similarity with sequenced bacterial genomes at the nucleotide level (Table 1). Using the taxonomic characterization from these MLGs, we found that almost all of the MLGs enriched in the control samples were from various butyrate-producing bacteria, including *Clostridiales* sp. SS3/4, *Eubacterium rectale*, *Faecalibacterium prausnitzii*, *Roseburia intestinalis* and *Roseburia inulinivorans*. By contrast, most of T2D-enriched MLGs were from opportunistic pathogens, such as *Bacteroides caecae*, *Clostridium hathewayi*, *Clostridium ramosum*, *Clostridium symbiosum*, *Eggerthella lenta* and *Escherichia coli*, which have previously been reported to cause or underlie human infections such as bacteraemia

and intra-abdominal infections^{22–25}. Of interest, the known mucin-degrading species *Akkermansia muciniphila* and sulphate-reducing species *Desulfovibrio* sp. 3_1_syn3 were also enriched in T2D samples. The MLGs that were of unknown species origin will be of interest for isolation and analysis in future studies to obtain information on their relevant taxonomy.

A co-occurrence network on these MLGs was generated to assess potential relationships between the T2D-associated gut bacteria (Fig. 2a and Supplementary Methods). In this result, some types of butyrate-producers, from clostridial cluster XIVa and IV, showed a positive correlation with one another and were negatively correlated with a group of the T2D-enriched bacteria from *Clostridium*, which may indicate an antagonistic relationship between these different clostridial clusters. Another interesting finding was the presence of a small MLG from *Haemophilus parainfluenzae*, which is not a butyrate-producer but was significantly enriched in the control samples, even in an independent analysis comparing the coverage of its sequenced bacterial genome (the highest genome coverage in all samples was 94.5%; $P < 0.001$ between case and control groups, Student's t -test). In the co-occurrence network, this MLG was clearly separate from the cluster of butyrate producers, and may have an unknown antagonistic relationship with a T2D-enriched bacterium that is unknown but appears closely related to the *Subdoligranulum* genus. These data presented various patterns indicating relationships between the T2D-associated gut bacteria and suggested it may be important to determine, in a case-by-case manner, the different roles gut bacteria may have in maintaining or interacting with their environment.

Functional characterization related to T2D

Using the T2D-associated KEGG orthologues and eggNOG orthologue groups markers, we assessed the potential microbial functional roles in the gut microbiota of T2D patients. In general T2D-enriched markers were typically involved in the KEGG categories of membrane transport ($P < 0.001$, Fisher's exact test). This result is consistent with

Table 1 | The list of T2D-associated MLGs that could be assigned to previously known phylotypes

MLG ID	No. of genes	P values*		Odds ratios (95% CI)†	Taxonomy assignment (level)	Percentage similarity‡
		Stage I	Stage II			
T2D-enriched						
T2D-154	337	0.0014	2.54 × 10 ⁻⁴	1.52 (1.05, 2.19)	<i>Akkermansia muciniphila</i>	98.2
T2D-140	148	3.97 × 10 ⁻⁴	0.0029	1.50 (1.15, 1.97)	<i>Bacteroides intestinalis</i>	98.2
T2D-139	3,386	0.0013	2.11 × 10 ⁻⁴	1.66 (1.26, 2.20)	<i>Bacteroides</i> sp. 20_3	99.3
T2D-11	5,113	4.16 × 10 ⁻⁸	7.58 × 10 ⁻⁵	5.89 (1.39, 25.0)	<i>Clostridium boletae</i>	99.4
T2D-5	2,378	4.21 × 10 ⁻⁵	1.97 × 10 ⁻⁶	23.1 (2.08, 257)	<i>Clostridium hathewayi</i>	99.3
T2D-80	2,381	1.30 × 10 ⁻⁴	1.41 × 10 ⁻⁵	1.68 (0.97, 2.89)	<i>Clostridium ramosum</i>	99.8
T2D-57	821	4.00 × 10 ⁻⁷	2.21 × 10 ⁻⁵	2.62 (1.14, 6.03)	<i>Clostridium</i> sp. HGF2	99.6
T2D-15	2,492	4.74 × 10 ⁻⁵	2.97 × 10 ⁻⁴	1.13 (0.88, 1.44)	<i>Clostridium symbiosum</i>	99.6
T2D-1	949	6.01 × 10 ⁻⁴	0.0036	1.41 (0.93, 2.13)	<i>Desulfovibrio</i> sp. 3_1_syn3	98.0
T2D-7	1,056	6.01 × 10 ⁻⁴	2.80 × 10 ⁻⁴	1.57 (0.95, 2.58)	<i>Eggerthella lenta</i>	99.6
T2D-137	425	6.71 × 10 ⁻⁷	0.0012	1.72 (1.16, 2.57)	<i>Escherichia coli</i>	99.0
T2D-165	131	0.0096	0.0017	1.46 (1.07, 1.99)	<i>Alistipes</i> (genus)	99.5§
T2D-12	364	4.52 × 10 ⁻⁶	8.04 × 10 ⁻⁶	2.22 (1.12, 4.40)	<i>Clostridium</i> (genus)	91.0
T2D-8	5,272	7.08 × 10 ⁻¹⁰	9.95 × 10 ⁻⁶	1.12 (0.86, 1.45)	<i>Clostridium</i> (genus)	88.8
T2D-93	1,590	2.01 × 10 ⁻⁴	0.0020	1.84 (1.03, 3.29)	<i>Parabacteroides</i> (genus)	80.5§
T2D-62	2,584	7.63 × 10 ⁻⁶	6.88 × 10 ⁻⁴	2.41 (1.43, 4.08)	<i>Subdoligranulum</i> (genus)	98.7§
T2D-2	2,430	3.14 × 10 ⁻⁵	0.0019	4.06 (1.28, 12.9)	<i>Lachnospiraceae</i> (family)	97.3§
Control-enriched						
Con-107	1,677	1.12 × 10 ⁻⁷	0.0018	1.44 (1.13, 1.84)	<i>Clostridiales</i> sp. SS3/4	98.0
Con-112	232	0.0064	1.99 × 10 ⁻⁴	1.51 (1.13, 2.03)	<i>Eubacterium rectale</i>	97.6
Con-129	1,440	0.0033	0.0010	1.55 (1.19, 2.00)	<i>Faecalibacterium prausnitzii</i>	98.2
Con-166	273	3.80 × 10 ⁻⁵	1.94 × 10 ⁻⁴	1.25 (0.93, 1.69)	<i>Haemophilus parainfluenzae</i>	94.8
Con-121	3,507	6.11 × 10 ⁻⁵	4.90 × 10 ⁻⁶	3.10 (1.92, 5.03)	<i>Roseburia intestinalis</i>	98.9
Con-113	345	2.85 × 10 ⁻⁴	9.72 × 10 ⁻⁴	1.45 (1.11, 1.89)	<i>Roseburia inulinivorans</i>	98.2
Con-120	116	1.90 × 10 ⁻⁴	5.41 × 10 ⁻⁴	1.55 (1.17, 2.06)	<i>Eubacterium</i> (genus)	89.0
Con-130	670	0.0134	0.0018	1.59 (1.21, 2.08)	<i>Faecalibacterium</i> (genus)	89.4
Con-131	202	8.99 × 10 ⁻⁴	0.0017	1.58 (1.16, 2.15)	<i>Faecalibacterium</i> (genus)	96.9
Con-133	1,555	3.43 × 10 ⁻⁵	0.0015	1.52 (1.15, 2.01)	<i>Erysipelotrichaceae</i> (family)	66.9§
Con-109	378	0.0135	1.67 × 10 ⁻⁴	1.41 (1.09, 1.83)	<i>Clostridiales</i> (order)	87.0

*The stage I P value was calculated after adjustment for population structures, stage II P value was one-side.

†Calculated by logistic model.

‡Similarity at nucleic acid level or, when marked with § at the protein level.

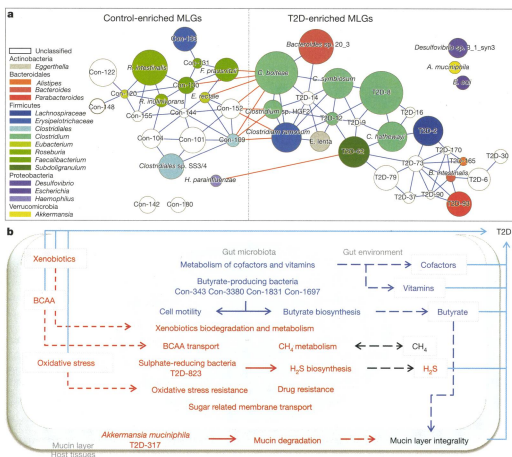


Figure 2 | Taxonomic and functional characterization of gut microbiota in T2D. **a**, A co-occurrence network was deduced from 47 MLGs that were identified from 52,484 gene markers. Nodes depict MLGs with their ID displayed in the centre. The size of the nodes indicates gene number within the MLG. The colour of the nodes indicates their taxonomic assignment. Connecting lines represent Spearman correlation coefficient values above 0.4

(blue) or below -0.4 (red). **b**, A schematic diagram showing the main functions of the gut microbes that had a predicted T2D association. Red text denotes enriched functions in T2D patients; blue text denotes depleted functions in T2D patients; black text denotes an uncertain functional role relative to T2D. The dashed line arrows point to the inference that was not detected directly but reported by previous studies.

the previous findings in studies of inflammatory bowel disease and obese patients²⁶. By contrast, control-enriched markers were frequently involved in cell motility and metabolism of cofactors and vitamins ($P < 0.002$; Supplementary Fig. 9).

At the module or pathway level, the gut microbiota of T2D patients was functionally characterized with our T2D-associated markers and showed enrichment in membrane transport of sugars, branched-chain amino acid (BCAA) transport, methane metabolism, xenobiotics degradation and metabolism, and sulphate reduction. By contrast, there was a decrease in the level of bacterial chemotaxis, flagellar assembly, butyrate biosynthesis and metabolism of cofactors and vitamins (Fig. 2b and Supplementary Table 10; see Supplementary Fig. 10 for the detailed information on butyrate-CoA transferase). Some important functions, including butyrate biosynthesis and sulphate reduction, coincided with the T2D-associated bacteria identified in the MLG analysis. The butyrate-producing bacteria seemed to be the primary contributors to the cell motility functions (Supplementary Table 11), potentially indicating some functional enrichment might be related to the presence of specific species enrichment.

We found that seven of the T2D-enriched KEGG orthologues markers were related to oxidative stress resistance, including catalase (K03781), peroxiredoxin (K03386), Mn-containing catalase (K07217), glutathione reductase (NADPH) (K00383), nitric oxide reductase (K02448), putative iron-dependent peroxidase (K07223), and cytochrome *c* peroxidase (K00428), but none of the identified control-enriched KEGG orthologues markers had similar types of function.

This may indicate that the gut environment of a T2D patient is one that stimulates bacterial defence mechanisms against oxidative stress (Supplementary Table 10). Similarly, we found 14 KEGG orthologues markers related to drug resistance that were greatly enriched in T2D patients, further supporting that T2D patients may have a more hostile gut environment, and the medical histories of these patients may reflect this (Supplementary Table 10).

T2D-related dysbiosis in gut microbiota

In light of the above MGWAS result and an additional PERMANOVA²⁷ (permutational multivariate analysis of variance) analysis that clearly showed that T2D was a significant factor for explaining the variation in the examined gut microbial samples (Supplementary Table 12), we deduced that the gut microbiota in T2D patients featured dysbiosis, which is a state where the balance of the normal microbiota has been disturbed. However, the degree of this T2D-related dysbiosis was moderate, because only $3.8 \pm 0.2\%$ (mean $\pm$ s.e.m.; $n = 344$) of the gut microbial genes (at the relative abundance level) were associated with T2D in an individual. Additionally, we did not observe a significant difference in the within-sample diversity between T2D and control groups (Fig. 3a). Specifically, the degree of gut microbiota change in T2D was not as substantial as that seen in inflammatory bowel disease (from the MetaHIT samples; see Fig. 3a) or enterotypes (Supplementary Fig. 11). A similar result using the eggNOG orthologue groups profile supported the same conclusion (Supplementary Fig. 12).

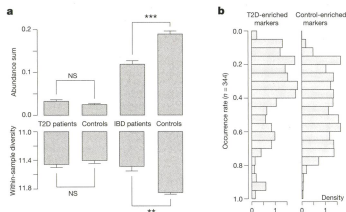


Figure 3 | Gut microbiota of T2D patients show a moderate degree of dysbiosis. **a**, An ecological comparison between T2D patients ($n = 170$) and control ($n = 174$) in all samples, as well as inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) patients ($n = 25$) and control ($n = 99$) from published MetaHIT samples⁴. The upward bars denote the gross relative abundance of the T2D-associated gene markers for each sample and the same value computed on the inflammatory-bowel-disease-associated gene markers (see Supplementary Methods). The downward bars denote the within-sample diversity (calculated using the Shannon index) in each group. For an individual sample, a lower proportion of gut microbiota was implicated in T2D disease and there was no significant difference in the within-sample diversity between the T2D patients and control as compared with the distinct difference seen in the inflammatory bowel disease analysis. $^{**}P < 0.01$; $^{***}P < 0.001$ (Student's t -test); NS, not significant; and the error bar denote standard error. **b**, A density histogram showing a comparison of the occurrence rate distribution between T2D-enriched gene markers and control-enriched gene markers in all samples ($n = 344$). The threshold of mapped read number for gene identification is ≥ 2 .

To characterize ecologically the gut bacteria involved in the T2D-related dysbiosis, we compared, in all individual samples, the distribution of the occurrence rate of both T2D-associated gene and function markers, and these showed the same pattern, which was that the control-enriched markers had a higher occurrence rate on average than the T2D-enriched markers (Fig. 3b and Supplementary Figs 13–15). This may be because the beneficial bacteria lost in the T2D gut were universally present, whereas some of the harmful bacteria that appeared in the T2D gut were diverse, and thus had less overall abundance within the human population.

Gut-microbiota-based T2D classification

To exploit the potential ability of T2D classification by gut microbiota, we developed a T2D classifier system based on the 50 gene markers that we defined as an optimal gene set by a minimum redundancy–maximum relevance (mRMR) feature selection method (Supplementary Fig. 16 and Supplementary Table 13). For intuitive evaluation of the risk of T2D disease based on these 50 gut microbial gene markers, we computed a T2D index (Supplementary Methods), which correlated well with the ratio of T2D patients in our population (Fig. 4a), and the area under the receiver operating characteristic (ROC) curve was 0.81 (95% confidence interval 0.76–0.85) (Fig. 4b), indicating the gut-microbiota-based T2D index could be used to classify T2D individuals accurately.

We validated the discriminatory power of our T2D classifier using an independent study group: 11 T2D patients and 12 non-diabetic controls. In this assessment analysis, the top eight samples with the highest T2D index were all T2D patients (Fig. 4c and Supplementary Table 14); the average T2D index between case and control was significantly different ($P = 0.004$, Student's t -test). Overall, our cross-sectional study in overt T2D indicated that it would be worthwhile to test more extensively gut-microbiota-based classifiers in future longitudinal studies for their ability to identify subsets of the population that are at high risk for progressing to clinically defined T2D.

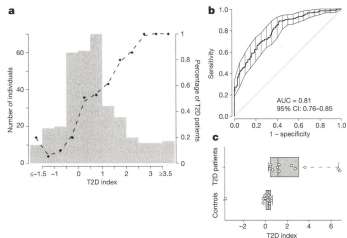


Figure 4 | A trial classification of T2D using gut microbial gene markers. **a**, A classifier to identify T2D individuals was constructed using 50 gene markers selected by mRMR, and then, for each individual, a T2D index was calculated to evaluate the risk of T2D. The histogram shows the distribution of T2D indices for all individuals, in which values less than -1.5 and values greater than 3.5 were grouped. For each bin, the black dots show the proportion of T2D patients in the population of that bin (y axis on the right). **b**, The area under the ROC curve (AUC) of gut-microbiota-based T2D classification. The black bars denote the 95% confidence interval (CI) and the area between the two outside curves represents the 95% CI shape. **c**, The T2D index was computed for an additional 11 Chinese T2D samples and 12 non-diabetic controls. The box depicts the interquartile range (IQR) between the first and third quartiles (25th and 75th percentiles, respectively) and the line inside denotes the median, whereas the points represent the T2D index in each sample.

Discussion

T2D is a heterogeneous and multifactorial disease, influenced by a number of different genetic and environmental factors. By applying the standard two-stage GWAS strategy to design and carry out a MGWAS to identify disease-associated metagenomic markers, the present study highlights how the gut microbial composition, traditionally considered to be factors of environmental origin¹², differs between T2D patients and non-diabetic control subjects in a Chinese population.

We first established an updated human microbial gene reference set, adding information from both a new ethnicity and from T2D patients, which will be a useful resource for future metagenomic analyses. We also developed the concept of a MLG, which provided various types of taxonomic information from whole-genome shotgun data, including bacterial species-specific regions on a chromosome, and mobile genetic elements, such as plasmids and bacteriophages. Thus, a MLG can provide metagenomic species-level information even for unknown species, instead of requiring traditional taxonomic classification approaches based on sequence composition or similarity^{28,29}. The use of species-level information allows assessment of the relationships between the T2D-associated bacteria. For example, we identified what appears to be an antagonistic relationship between beneficial bacteria and harmful bacteria, highlighted by the large populations of clostridial clusters. These species-level analyses also showed various patterns: for example, the MLG from *Haemophilus parainfluenzae* in the control samples could be inferred, under these circumstances, to be beneficial; however, on the basis of relationship patterns, it was quite distinct from the other inferred beneficial bacteria, indicating that *H. parainfluenzae* may have a different type of impact in this specific biological context (Fig. 2a).

Our findings indicated that T2D patients had only a moderate degree gut bacterial dysbiosis; however, functional annotation analyses indicated a decline in butyrate-producing bacteria, which may be metabolically beneficial, and an increase in several opportunistic

pathogens. Importantly, the abundance of these categories of opportunistic pathogens seemed to be quite diverse among our Chinese study participants. Such changes in the intestinal bacteria composition have recently been reported for colorectal cancer patients³⁰ and ageing population³¹. Thus, a general picture is emerging where butyrate-producing bacteria seem to have a protective role against several types of diseases. Additionally, our finding of a general dysbiosis in T2D patients raises the possibility that there is a 'functional dysbiosis', rather than there being a specific microbial species that has a direct association with T2D pathophysiology. Furthermore, given that other intestinal diseases show a loss of butyrate-producing bacteria with a commensurate increase in opportunistic pathogens, it is possible that dysbiosis that results in a disordered, rather than directional, alteration of gut microbial composition may itself have a role in increasing the susceptibility to a variety of diseases.

Our analysis of bacterial gene functions indicating there was an increase in functions relating to gut oxidative stress response is also of interest, given that previous studies have shown that a high oxidative stress level is related to a predisposition for diabetic complications³². Finally, our findings that gut metagenomic markers are able to differentiate between T2D cases and controls with a higher level of specificity than similar analyses based on human genome variation³³ raises the possibility for a mode of monitoring gut health and a complementary approach for risk assessment of this common disorder.

METHODS SUMMARY

Sample collection and DNA extraction. Faecal samples were obtained from 368 volunteers (345 samples for MGWAS and 23 additional samples for T2D classification) after signing an informed consent form. The sampling procedure was approved by the Ethical Committee for Clinical Research from the Peking University Shenzhen Hospital, Shenzhen Second People's Hospital and Medical Research Center of Guangdong General Hospital. The individuals had not received any antibiotic treatment within 2 months before sample collection. The samples were frozen immediately and underwent DNA extraction using standard methods³⁴.

Sequencing and data processing. Illumina GAIIx and HiSeq 2000 were used to sequence the samples. We constructed a paired-end library with insert size of ~350 base pairs for every sample. Adaptor contamination and low-quality reads were discarded from the raw reads, and the remaining reads were filtered to eliminate human host DNA based on the human genome reference (hg18).

Full Methods and associated references are available in the Supplementary Information.

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Author Information The raw Illumina read data of all 368 samples has been deposited in the NCBI Sequence Read Archive under accession numbers SRA045646 and SRA050230. The assembly data, updated metagenome gene catalogue, annotation information, and MGIs are published in the GigaScience database, GigaDB³⁵. Reprints and permissions information is available at www.nature.com/reprints. The authors declare no competing financial interests. Readers are welcome to comment on the online version of the paper. Correspondence and requests for materials should be addressed to Ju.W. (wang@genomics.org.cn).

Comprehensive molecular portraits of human breast tumours

The Cancer Genome Atlas Network*

We analysed primary breast cancers by genomic DNA copy number arrays, DNA methylation, exome sequencing, messenger RNA arrays, microRNA sequencing and reverse-phase protein arrays. Our ability to integrate information across platforms provided key insights into previously defined gene expression subtypes and demonstrated the existence of four main breast cancer classes when combining data from five platforms, each of which shows significant molecular heterogeneity. Somatic mutations in only three genes (*TP53*, *PIK3CA* and *GATA3*) occurred at >10% incidence across all breast cancers; however, there were numerous subtype-associated and novel gene mutations including the enrichment of specific mutations in *GATA3*, *PIK3CA* and *MAP3K1* with the luminal A subtype. We identified two novel protein-expression-defined subgroups, possibly produced by stromal/microenvironmental elements, and integrated analyses identified specific signalling pathways dominant in each molecular subtype including a *HER2*/phosphorylated *HER2*/EGFR/phosphorylated EGFR signature within the *HER2*-enriched expression subtype. Comparison of basal-like breast tumours with high-grade serous ovarian tumours showed many molecular commonalities, indicating a related aetiology and similar therapeutic opportunities. The biological finding of the four main breast cancer subtypes caused by different subsets of genetic and epigenetic abnormalities raises the hypothesis that much of the clinically observable plasticity and heterogeneity occurs within, and not across, these major biological subtypes of breast cancer.

Breast cancer is one of the most common cancers with greater than 1,300,000 cases and 450,000 deaths each year worldwide. Clinically, this heterogeneous disease is categorized into three basic therapeutic groups. The oestrogen receptor (ER) positive group is the most numerous and diverse, with several genomic tests to assist in predicting outcomes for ER⁺ patients receiving endocrine therapy^{1,2}. The *HER2* (also called *ERBB2*) amplified group³ is a great clinical success because of effective therapeutic targeting of *HER2*, which has led to intense efforts to characterize other DNA copy number aberrations^{4,5}. Triple-negative breast cancers (TNBCs, lacking expression of ER, progesterone receptor (PR) and *HER2*), also known as basal-like breast cancers⁶, are a group with only chemotherapy options, and have an increased incidence in patients with germline *BRCA1* mutations^{7,8} or of African ancestry⁹.

Most molecular studies of breast cancer have focused on just one or two high information content platforms, most frequently mRNA expression profiling or DNA copy number analysis, and more recently massively parallel sequencing^{10–12}. Supervised clustering of mRNA expression data has reproducibly established that breast cancers encompass several distinct disease entities, often referred to as the intrinsic subtypes of breast cancer^{13,14}. The recent development of additional high information content assays focused on abnormalities in DNA methylation, microRNA (miRNA) expression and protein expression, provide further opportunities to characterize more completely the molecular architecture of breast cancer. In this study, a diverse set of breast tumours were assayed using six different technology platforms. Individual platform and integrated pathway analyses identified many subtype-specific mutations and copy number changes that identify therapeutically tractable genomic aberrations and other events driving tumour biology.

Samples and clinical data

Tumour and germline DNA samples were obtained from 825 patients. Different subsets of patients were assayed on each platform:

466 tumours from 463 patients had data available on five platforms including Agilent mRNA expression microarrays ($n = 547$), Illumina Infinium DNA methylation chips ($n = 802$), Affymetrix 6.0 single nucleotide polymorphism (SNP) arrays ($n = 773$), miRNA sequencing ($n = 697$), and whole-exome sequencing ($n = 507$); in addition, 348 of the 466 samples also had reverse-phase protein array (RPPA) data ($n = 403$). Owing to the short median overall follow up (17 months) and the small number of overall survival events (93 out of 818), survival analyses will be presented in a later publication. Demographic and clinical characteristics are presented in Supplementary Table 1.

Significantly mutated genes in breast cancer

Overall, 510 tumours from 507 patients were subjected to whole-exome sequencing, identifying 30,626 somatic mutations comprised of 28,319 point mutations, 4 dinucleotide mutations, and 2,302 insertions/deletions (indels) (ranging from 1 to 53 nucleotides). The point mutations included 6,486 silent, 19,045 missense, 1,437 nonsense, 26 read-through, 506 splice-site mutations, and 819 mutations in RNA genes. Comparison to COSMIC and OMIM databases identified 619 mutations across 177 previously reported cancer genes. Of 19,045 missense mutations, 9,484 were predicted to have a high probability of being deleterious by Condel¹⁵. The MuSiC package¹⁶, which determines the significance of the observed mutation rate of each gene based on the background mutation rate, identified 35 significantly mutated genes (excluding LOC or Ensembl gene IDs) by at least two tests (convolution and likelihood ratio tests) with false discovery rate (FDR) <5% (Supplementary Table 2).

In addition to identifying nearly all genes previously implicated in breast cancer (*PIK3CA*, *PTEN*, *AKT1*, *TP53*, *GATA3*, *CDH1*, *RBI*, *MLL3*, *MAP3K1* and *CDKN1B*), a number of novel significantly mutated genes were identified including *TBX3*, *RUNX1*, *CBF3*, *AF2*, *PIK3R1*, *PTPN22*, *PTPRD*, *NF1*, *SF3B1* and *CCND3*. *TBX3*, which is mutated in ulnar-mammary syndrome and involved in mammary gland development¹⁷, harboured 13 mutations (8 frame-shift indels,

*A list of participants and their affiliations appears at the end of the paper.

1 in-frame deletion, 1 nonsense, and 3 missense), suggesting a loss of function. Additionally, 2 mutations were found in *TBX4* and 1 mutation in *TBX5*, which are genes involved in Holt–Oram syndrome¹⁸. Two other transcription factors, *CTCF* and *FOXA1*, were at or near significance harbouring 13 and 8 mutations, respectively. *RUNX1* and *CBBF*, both rearranged in acute myeloid leukaemia and interfering with haematopoietic differentiation, harboured 19 and 9 mutations, respectively. *PIK3R1* contained 14 mutations, most of which clustered in the PIK3CA interaction domain similar to previously identified mutations in glioma¹⁹ and endometrial cancer²⁰. We also observed a statistically significant exclusion pattern among *PIK3R1*, *PIK3CA*, *PTEN* and *AKT1* mutations ($P = 0.025$). Mutation of splicing factor *SF3B1*, previously described in myelodysplastic syndromes²¹ and chronic lymphocytic leukaemia²², was significant with 15 non-silent mutations, of which 4 were a recurrent K700E substitution. Two protein tyrosine phosphatases (*PTPN22* and *PTPRD*) were also significantly mutated; frequent deletion/mutation of *PTPRD* is observed in lung adenocarcinoma²³.

Mutations and mRNA-expression subtype associations

We analysed the somatic mutation spectrum within the context of the four mRNA-expression subtypes, excluding the normal-like group owing to small numbers ($n = 8$) (Fig. 1). Several significantly mutated genes showed mRNA-subtype-specific (Supplementary Figs 1–3) and clinical-subtype-specific patterns of mutation (Supplementary Table 2). Significantly mutated genes were considerably more diverse and recurrent within luminal A and luminal B tumours than within basal-like and HER2-enriched (HER2E) subtypes; however, the overall mutation rate was lowest in luminal A subtype and highest in the basal-like and HER2E subtypes. The luminal A subtype harboured the most significantly mutated genes, with the most frequent being *PIK3CA* (45%), followed by *MAP3K1*, *GATA3*, *TP53*, *CDH1* and *MAP2K4*. Twelve per cent of luminal A tumours contained likely inactivating mutations in *MAP3K1* and *MAP2K4*, which represent two contiguous

steps in the p38–JNK1 stress kinase pathway²⁴. Luminal B cancers exhibited a diversity of significantly mutated genes, with *TP53* and *PIK3CA* (29% each) being the most frequent. The luminal tumour subtypes markedly contrasted with basal-like cancers where *TP53* mutations occurred in 80% of cases and the majority of the luminal significantly mutated gene repertoire, except *PIK3CA* (9%), were absent or near absent. The HER2E subtype, which has frequent *HER2* amplification (80%), had a hybrid pattern with a high frequency of *TP53* (72%) and *PIK3CA* (39%) mutations and a much lower frequency of other significantly mutated genes including *PIK3R1* (4%).

Intrinsic mRNA subtypes differed not only by mutation frequencies but also by mutation type. Most notably, *TP53* mutations in basal-like tumours were mostly nonsense and frame shift, whereas missense mutations predominated in luminal A and B tumours (Supplementary Fig. 1). Fifty-eight somatic *GATA3* mutations, some of which were previously described²⁵, were detected including a hotspot 2-base-pair deletion within intron 4 only in the luminal A subtype (13 out of 13 mutants) (Supplementary Fig. 2). In contrast, 7 out of 9 frame-shift mutations in exon 5 (DNA binding domain) occurred in luminal B cancers. *PIK3CA* mutation frequency and spectrum also varied by mRNA subtype (Supplementary Fig. 3); the recurrent *PIK3CA* E545K mutation was present almost exclusively within luminal A (25 out of 27) tumours. *CDH1* mutations were common (30 out of 36) within the lobular histological subtype and corresponded with lower *CDH1* mRNA (Supplementary Fig. 4) and protein expression. Finally, we identified 4 out of 8 somatic variants in *HER2* within lobular cancers, three of which were within the tyrosine kinase domain.

We performed analyses on a selected set of genes²⁶ using the normal tissue DNA data and detected a number of germline predisposing variants. These analyses identified 47 out of 507 patients with deleterious germline variants, representing nine different genes (*ATM*, *BRCA1*, *BRCA2*, *BRIP1*, *CHEK2*, *NBN*, *PTEN*, *RAD51C* and *TP53*; Supplementary Table 3), supporting the hypothesis that ~10% of sporadic breast cancers may have a strong germline contribution.

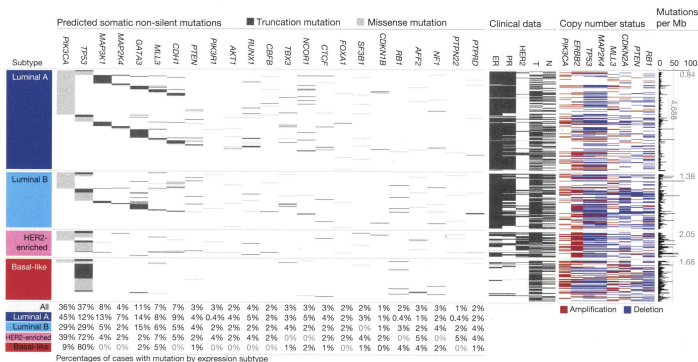


Figure 1 | Significantly mutated genes and correlations with genomic and clinical features. Tumour samples are grouped by mRNA subtype: luminal A ($n = 225$), luminal B ($n = 126$), HER2E ($n = 57$) and basal-like ($n = 93$). The left panel shows non-silent somatic mutation patterns and frequencies for significantly mutated genes. The middle panel shows clinical features: dark grey, positive or T2–4; white, negative or T1; light grey, N/A or equivocal.

N, node status; T, tumour size. The right panel shows significantly mutated genes with frequent copy number amplifications (red) or deletions (blue). The far-right panel shows non-silent mutation rate per tumour (mutations per megabase, adjusted for coverage). The average mutation rate for each expression subtype is indicated. Hypermutated: mutation rates >3 s.d. above the mean (>4.688 , indicated by grey line).

These data confirmed the association between the presence of germline *BRCA1* mutations and basal-like breast cancers^{7,8}.

Gene expression analyses (mRNA and miRNA)

Several approaches were used to look for structure in the mRNA expression data. We performed an unsupervised hierarchical clustering analysis of 525 tumours and 22 tumour-adjacent normal tissues using the top 3,662 variably expressed genes (Supplementary Fig. 5); SigClust analysis identified 12 classes (5 classes with >9 samples per class). We performed a semi-supervised hierarchical cluster analysis using a previously published 'intrinsic gene list'¹⁴, which identified 13 classes (9 classes with >9 samples per class) (Supplementary Fig. 6). We also classified each sample using the 50-gene PAM50 model¹⁴ (Supplementary Fig. 5). High concordance was observed between all three analyses; therefore, we used the PAM50-defined subtype predictor as a common classification metric. There were only eight normal-like and eight claudin-low tumours²⁷, thus we did not perform focused analyses on these two subtypes.

MicroRNA expression levels were assayed via Illumina sequencing, using 1,222 miRBase²⁸ v16 mature and star strands as the reference database of miRNA transcripts/genes. Seven subtypes were identified by consensus non-negative matrix factorization (NMF) clustering using an abundance matrix containing the 25% most variable miRNAs (306 transcripts/genes or MIMATs (miRNA IDs)). These subtypes correlated with mRNA subtypes, ER, PR and HER2 clinical status (Supplementary Fig. 7). Of note, miRNA groups 4 and 5 showed high overlap with the basal-like mRNA subtype and contained many *TP53* mutations. The remaining miRNA groups (1–3, 6 and 7) were composed of a mixture of luminal A, luminal B and HER2 with little correlation with the PAM50 defined subtypes. With the exception of *TP53*—which showed a strong positive correlation—and *PIK3CA* and *GATA3*—which showed negative associations with groups 4 and 5, respectively—there was little correlation with mutation status and miRNA subtype.

DNA methylation

Illumina Infinium DNA methylation arrays were used to assay 802 breast tumours. Data from HumanMethylation27 (HM27) and HumanMethylation450 (HM450) arrays were combined and filtered to yield a common set of 574 probes used in an unsupervised clustering analysis, which identified five distinct DNA methylation groups (Supplementary Fig. 8). Group 3 showed a hypermethylated phenotype and was significantly enriched for luminal B mRNA subtype and under-represented for *PIK3CA*, *MAP3K1* and *MAP2K4* mutations. Group 5 showed the lowest levels of DNA methylation, overlapped with the basal-like mRNA subtype, and showed a high frequency of *TP53* mutations. HER2-positive (HER2⁺) clinical status, or the HER2E mRNA subtype, had only a modest association with the methylation subtypes.

A supervised analysis of the DNA methylation and mRNA expression data was performed to compare DNA methylation group 3 ($N = 49$) versus all tumours in groups 1, 2 and 4 (excluding group 5, which consisted predominantly of basal-like tumours). This analysis identified 4,283 genes differentially methylated (3,735 higher in group 3 tumours) and 1,899 genes differentially expressed (1,232 downregulated); 490 genes were both methylated and showed lower expression in group 3 tumours (Supplementary Table 4). A DAVID (database for annotation, visualization and integrated discovery) functional annotation analysis identified 'extracellular region part' and 'Wnt signalling pathway' to be associated with this 490-gene set; the group 3 hypermethylated samples showed fewer *PIK3CA* and *MAP3K1* mutations, and lower expression of Wnt-pathway genes.

DNA copy number

A total of 773 breast tumours were assayed using Affymetrix 6.0 SNP arrays. Segmentation analysis and GISTIC were used to

identify focal amplifications/deletions and arm-level gains and losses (Supplementary Table 5). These analyses confirmed all previously reported copy number variations and highlighted a number of significantly mutated genes including focal amplification of regions containing *PIK3CA*, *EGFR*, *FOXA1* and *HER2*, as well as focal deletions of regions containing *MLL3*, *PTEN*, *RBI* and *MAP2K4* (Supplementary Fig. 9); in all cases, multiple genes were included within each altered region. Importantly, many of these copy number changes correlated with mRNA subtype including characteristic loss of 5q and gain of 10p in basal-like cancers^{2,29} and gain of 1q and/or 16q loss in luminal tumours⁴. NMF clustering of GISTIC segments identified five copy number clusters/groups that correlated with mRNA subtypes, ER, PR and HER2 clinical status, and *TP53* mutation status (Supplementary Fig. 10). In addition, this aCGH subtype classification was highly correlated with the aCGH subtypes recently defined by ref. 30 (Supplementary Fig. 11).

Reverse phase protein arrays

Quantified expression of 171 cancer-related proteins and phosphoproteins by RPPA was performed on 403 breast tumours³¹. Unsupervised hierarchical clustering analyses identified seven subtypes; one class contained too few cases for further analysis (Supplementary Fig. 12). These protein subtypes were highly concordant with the mRNA subtypes, particularly with basal-like and HER2E mRNA subtypes. Closer examination of the HER2-containing RPPA-defined subgroup showed coordinated overexpression of HER2 and EGFR with a strong concordance with phosphorylated HER2 (pY1248) and EGFR (pY992), probably from heterodimerization and cross-phosphorylation. Although there is a potential for modest cross reactivity of antibodies against these related total and phospho-proteins, the concordance of phosphorylation of HER2 and EGFR was confirmed using multiple independent antibodies.

In RPPA-defined luminal tumours, there was high protein expression of ER, PR, AR, BCL2, *GATA3* and INPP4B, defining mostly luminal A cancers and a second more heterogeneous protein subgroup composed of both luminal A and luminal B cancers. Two potentially novel protein-defined subgroups were identified: reactive I consisted primarily of a subset of luminal A tumours, whereas reactive II consisted of a mixture of mRNA subtypes. These groups are termed 'reactive' because many of the characteristic proteins are probably produced by the microenvironment and/or cancer-activated fibroblasts including fibronectin, caveolin 1 and collagen VI. These two RPPA groups did not have a marked difference in the percentage tumour cell content when compared to each other, or the other protein subtypes, as assessed by SNP array analysis or pathological examination. In addition, supervised analyses of reactive I versus II groups using miRNA expression, DNA methylation, mutation, or DNA copy number data identified no significant differences between these groups, whereas similar supervised analyses using protein and mRNA expression identified many differences.

Multiparameter subtype discovery

To reveal higher-order structure in breast tumours based on multiple data types, significant clusters/subtypes from each of five platforms were analysed using a multiparameter data matrix subjected to unsupervised consensus clustering (Fig. 2). This 'cluster of clusters' (C-of-C) approach illustrated that basal-like cancers had the most distinct multiparameter signature as all the different platforms for the basal-like groups clustered together. To a great extent, the four major C-of-C subdivisions correlated well with the previously published mRNA subtypes (driven, in part, by the fact that the four intrinsic subtypes were one of the inputs). Therefore, we also performed C-of-C analysis with no mRNA data present (Supplementary Fig. 13) or with the 12 unsupervised mRNA subtypes (Supplementary Fig. 14), and in each case 4–6 groups were identified. Recent work identified ten copy-number-based subgroups in a 997 breast cancer set³⁰. We evaluated

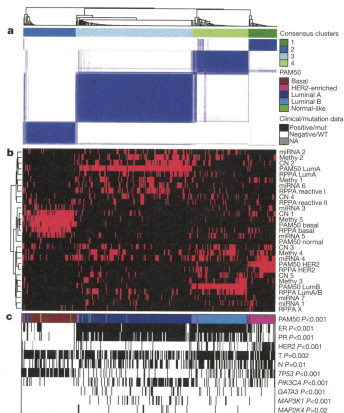


Figure 2 | Coordinated analysis of breast cancer subtypes defined from five different genomic/proteomic platforms. **a**, Consensus clustering analysis of the subtypes identifies four major groups (samples, $n = 348$). The blue and white heat map displays sample consensus. **b**, Heat-map display of the subtypes defined independently by mRNAs, DNA methylation, copy number (CN), PAM50 mRNA expression, and RPPA expression. The red bar indicates membership of a cluster type. **c**, Associations with molecular and clinical features. P values were calculated using a chi-squared test.

this classification in a C-of-C analysis instead of our five-class copy number subtypes, with either the PAM50 (Supplementary Fig. 15) or 12 unsupervised mRNA subtypes (Supplementary Fig. 16); each of these C-of-C classifications was highly correlated with PAM50 mRNA subtypes and with the other C-of-C analyses (Fig. 2). The transcriptional profiling and RPPA platforms demonstrated a high correlation with the consensus structure, indicating that the information content from copy number aberrations, mRNAs and methylation is captured at the level of gene expression and protein function.

Luminal/ER⁺ summary analysis

Luminal/ER⁺ breast cancers are the most heterogeneous in terms of gene expression (Supplementary Fig. 5), mutation spectrum (Fig. 1), copy number changes (Supplementary Fig. 9) and patient outcomes^{1,14}. One of the most dominant features is high mRNA and protein expression of the luminal expression signature (Supplementary Fig. 5), which contains *ESR1*, *GATA3*, *FOXA1*, *XBPI* and *MYB*; the luminal/ER⁺ cluster also contained the largest number of significantly mutated genes. Most notably, *GATA3* and *FOXA1* were mutated in a mutually exclusive fashion, whereas *ESR1* and *XBPI* were typically highly expressed but infrequently mutated. Mutations in *RUNX1* and its dimerization partner *C/EBF* may also have a role in aberrant ER signalling in luminal tumours, as *RUNX1* functions as an ER 'DNA tethering factor'³². PARADIGM³³ analysis comparing luminal versus basal-like cancers further emphasized the presence of a hyperactivated FOXA1–ER complex as a critical network hub differentiating these two tumour subtypes (Supplementary Fig. 17).

A confirmatory finding here was the high mutation frequency of *PIK3CA* in luminal/ER⁺ breast cancers^{34,35}. Through multiple

technology platforms, we examined possible relationships between *PIK3CA* mutation, *PTEN* loss, *INPP4B* loss and multiple gene and protein expression signatures of pathway activity. RPPA data demonstrated that pAKT, pS6 and p4EBP1, typical markers of phosphatidylinositol-3-OH kinase (PI(3)K) pathway activation, were not elevated in *PIK3CA*-mutated luminal A cancers; instead, they were highly expressed in basal-like and HER2E mRNA subtypes (the latter having frequent *PIK3CA* mutations) and correlated strongly with *INPP4B* and *PTEN* loss, and to a degree with *PIK3CA* amplification. Similarly, protein³⁶ and three mRNA signatures^{37–39} of PI(3)K pathway activation were enriched in basal-like over luminal A cancers (Fig. 3a). This apparent disconnect between the presence of *PIK3CA* mutations and biomarkers of pathway activation has been previously noted³⁶.

Another striking luminal/ER⁺ subtype finding was the frequent mutation of *MAP3K1* and *MAP2K4*, which represent two contiguous steps within the p38–JNK1 pathway^{24,40}. These mutations are predicted to be inactivating, with *MAP2K4* also a target of focal DNA loss in luminal tumours (Supplementary Fig. 9). To explore the possible interplay between *PIK3CA*, *MAP3K* and *MAP2K4* signalling, MEMO analysis⁴¹ was performed to identify mutually exclusive alterations targeting frequently altered genes likely to belong to the same pathway (Fig. 4). Across all breast cancers, MEMO identified a set of modules that highlight the differential activation events within the receptor tyrosine kinase (RTK)–PI(3)K pathway (Fig. 4a); mutations of *PIK3CA* were very common in luminal/ER⁺ cancers whereas *PTEN* loss was more common in basal-like tumours. Almost all *MAP3K1* and *MAP2K4* mutations were in luminal tumours, yet *MAP3K1* and *MAP2K4* appeared almost mutually exclusive relative to one another.

The TP53 pathway was differentially inactivated in luminal/ER⁺ breast cancers, with a low *TP53* mutation frequency in luminal A (12%) and a higher frequency in luminal B (29%) cancers (Fig. 1). In addition to *TP53* itself, a number of other pathway-inactivating events occurred including *ATM* loss and *MDM2* amplification (Figs 3b and 4b), both of which occurred more frequently within luminal B cancers. Gene expression analysis demonstrated that individual markers of functional TP53 (*GADD45A* and *CDKN1A*), and TP53 activity^{42,43} signatures, were highest in luminal A cancers (Fig. 3b). These data indicate that the TP53 pathway remains largely intact in luminal A cancers but is often inactivated in the more aggressive luminal B cancers⁴⁴. Other PARADIGM-based pathway differences driving luminal B versus luminal A included hyperactivation of transcriptional activity associated with *MYC* and *FOXM1* proliferation.

The critical retinoblastoma/RB1 pathway also showed mRNA-subtype-specific alterations (Fig. 3c). RB1 itself, by mRNA and protein expression, was detectable in most luminal cancers, with highest levels within luminal A. A common oncogenic event was cyclin D1 amplification and high expression, which preferentially occurred within luminal tumours, and more specifically within luminal B. In contrast, the presumed tumour suppressor *CDKN2C* (also called *p18*) was at its lowest levels in luminal A cancers, consistent with observations in mouse models⁴⁵. Finally, RB1 activity signatures were also high in luminal cancers^{46–48}. Luminal A tumours, which have the best prognosis, are the most likely to retain activity of the major tumour suppressors RB1 and TP53.

These genomic characterizations also provided clues for druggable targets. We compiled a drug target table in which we defined a target as a gene/protein for which there is an approved or investigational drug in human clinical trials targeting the molecule or canonical pathway (Supplementary Table 6). In luminal/ER⁺ cancers, the high frequency of *PIK3CA* mutations suggests that inhibitors of this activated kinase or its signalling pathway may be beneficial. Other potential significantly mutated gene drug candidates include AKT1 inhibitors (11 out of 12 AKT1 variants were luminal) and PARP inhibitors for *BRCA1/BRCA2* mutations. Although still unapproved as biomarkers, many potential copy-number-based drug targets

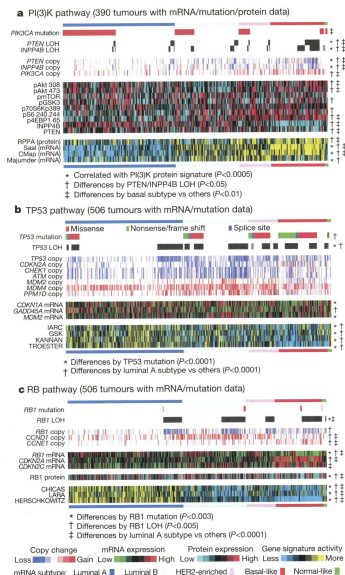


Figure 3 | Integral analysis of the PI(3)K, TP53 and RB1 pathways. Breast cancer subtypes differ by genetic and genomic targeting events, with corresponding effects on pathway activity. **a–c**, For PI(3)K (**a**), TP53 (**b**) and RB1 (**c**) pathways, key genes were selected using prior biological knowledge. Multiple mRNA expression signatures for a given pathway were defined (details in Supplementary Methods). PI(3)K:Saal, PTEN loss in human breast tumours; CMap, PI(3)K/mTOR inhibitor treatment *in vitro*; Majumder, Akt overexpression in mouse model; TP53: IARC, expert-curated *TP53* targets; GSK, *TP53* mutant versus wild-type cell lines; KANNAN, *TP53* overexpression *in vitro*; TROESTER, *TP53* knockdown *in vitro*; RB: CHICAS, *RB1* mouse knockout versus wild type; LARA, *RB1* knockdown *in vitro*; HERSCHKOWITZ, *RB1* loss of heterozygosity (LOH) in human breast tumours) and applied to the gene expression data, in order to score each tumour for relative signature activity (yellow, more active). The PI(3)K panel includes a protein-based (RPPA) proteomic signature. Tumours were ordered first by mRNA signature, although specific ordering differs between the panels. *P* values were calculated by a Pearson's correlation or a Chi-squared test.

HER2-amplified associated genes that in part define the HER2E mRNA subtype (Supplementary Fig. 5). However, not all clinically HER2⁺ tumours are of the HER2E mRNA subtype, and not all tumours in the HER2E mRNA subtype are clinically HER2⁺. Integrated analysis of the RPPA and mRNA data clearly identified a HER2⁺ group (Supplementary Fig. 12). When the HER2⁺ protein and HER2E mRNA subtypes overlapped, a strong signal of EGFR, pEGFR, HER2 and pHER2 was observed. However, only ~50% of clinically HER2⁺ tumours fall into this HER2E-mRNA-subtype/HER2-protein group, the rest of the clinically HER2⁺ tumours were observed predominantly in the luminal mRNA subtypes.

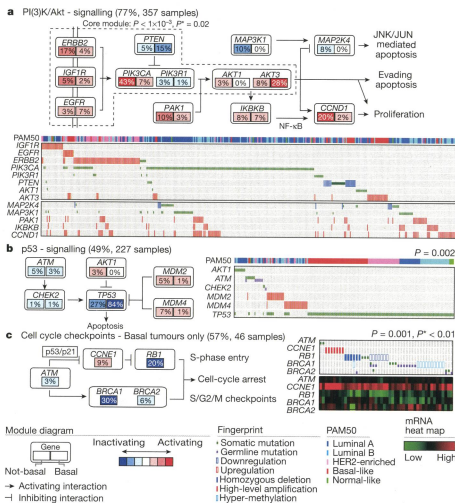


Figure 4 | Mutual exclusivity modules in cancer (MEMO) analysis. Mutual exclusivity modules are represented by their gene components and connected to reflect their activity in distinct pathways. For each gene, the frequency of alteration in basal-like (right box) and non-basal (left box) is reported. Next to each module is a fingerprint indicating what specific alteration is observed for each gene (row) in each sample (column). **a**, MEMO identified several overlapping modules that recapitulate the RTK–PI(3)K and p38–JNK1

signalling pathways and whose core was the top-scoring module. **b**, MEMO identified alterations to TP53 signalling as occurring within a statistically significant mutually exclusive trend. **c**, A basal-like only MEMO analysis identified one module that included ATM mutations, defects at *BRCA1* and *BRCA2*, and deregulation of the *RBI* pathway. A gene expression heat map is below the fingerprint to show expression levels.

However, ~75% of TNBCs are basal-like with the other 25% comprised of all other mRNA subtypes⁶. In this data set, there was a high degree of overlap between these two distinctions with 76 TNBCs, 81 basal-like, and 65 that were both TNBCs and basal-like. Given the known heterogeneity of TNBCs, and that the basal-like subtype proved to be distinct on every platform, we chose to use the basal-like distinction for comparative analyses.

Basal-like tumours showed a high frequency of *TP53* mutations (80%)⁸, which when combined with inferred *TP53* pathway activity suggests that loss of *TP53* function occurs within most, if not all, basal-like cancers (Fig. 3b). In addition to loss of *TP53*, a MEMO analysis reconfirmed that loss of *RBI* and *BRCA1* are basal-like features (Fig. 4c)^{47,50}. *PIK3CA* was the next most commonly mutated gene (~9%); however, inferred PI(3)K pathway activity, whether from gene^{37–39}, protein¹⁶, or high PI(3)K/AKT pathway activities, was highest in basal-like cancers (Fig. 3a). Alternative means of activating the PI(3)K pathway in basal-like cancers probably includes loss of *PTEN* and *INPP4B* and/or amplification of *PIK3CA*. A recent paper¹² performed exome sequencing of 102 TNBCs. Five of the top six most frequent TNBC mutations in ref. 12 were also observed at a similar frequency in our TNBC subset (*Myc3A* not present here); of those five, three passed our test as a significantly mutated gene in TNBCs (Supplementary Table 2).

Expression features of basal-like tumours include a characteristic signature containing keratins 5, 6 and 17 and high expression of genes associated with cell proliferation (Supplementary Fig. 5). A PARADIGM³³ analysis of basal-like versus luminal tumours emphasized the importance of hyperactivated *FOXM3* as a transcriptional driver of this enhanced proliferation signature (Supplementary Fig. 17). PARADIGM also identified hyperactivated *MYC* and *HIF1-α*/ARNT network hubs as key regulatory features of basal-like cancers. Even though chromosome 8q24 is amplified across all subtypes (Supplementary Fig. 9), high *MYC* activation seems to be a basal-like characteristic⁵¹.

Given the striking contrasts between basal-like and luminal/HER2E subtypes, we performed a MEMO analysis on basal-like tumours alone. The top-scoring module included *ATM* mutations, *BRCA1* and *BRCA2* inactivation, *RBI* loss and cyclin E1 amplification (Fig. 4c). Notably, these same modules were identified previously for serous ovarian cancers⁴¹. Furthermore, the basal-like (and TNBC) mutation spectrum was reminiscent of the spectrum seen in serous ovarian cancers⁵² with only one gene (that is, *TP53*) at >10% mutation frequency. To explore possible similarities between serous ovarian and the breast basal-like cancers, we performed a number of analyses comparing ovarian versus breast luminal, ovarian versus breast basal-like, and breast basal-like versus breast luminal cancers

Table 1 | Highlights of genomic, clinical and proteomic features of subtypes

Subtype	Luminal A	Luminal B	Basal-like	HER2E
ER ⁺ /HER2 ⁻ (%)	87	82	10	20
HER2 ⁺ (%)	7	15	2	68
TNBCs (%)	2	1	80	9
TP53 pathway	TP53 mut (12%); gain of MDM2 (14%)	TP53 mut (32%); gain of MDM2 (31%)	TP53 mut (84%); gain of MDM2 (14%)	TP53 mut (75%); gain of MDM2 (30%)
PIK3CA/PTEN pathway	PIK3CA mut (49%); PTEN mut/loss (13%); INPP4B loss (9%)	PIK3CA mut (32%) PTEN mut/loss (24%); INPP4B loss (16%)	PIK3CA mut (7%); PTEN mut/loss (35%); INPP4B loss (30%)	PIK3CA mut (42%); PTEN mut/loss (19%); INPP4B loss (30%)
RB1 pathway	Cyclin D1 amp (29%); CDK4 gain (14%); low expression of CDKN2C; high expression of RB1	Cyclin D1 amp (58%); CDK4 gain (25%)	RB1 mut/loss (20%); cyclin E1 amp (9%); high expression of CDKN2A; low expression of RB1	Cyclin D1 amp (38%); CDK4 gain (24%)
mRNA expression	High ER cluster; low proliferation	Lower ER cluster; high proliferation	Basal signature; high proliferation	HER2 amplification signature; high proliferation
Copy number	Most diploid; many with quiet genomes; 1q, 8q, 8p11 gain; 8p, 16q loss; 11q13.3 amp (24%)	Most aneuploid; many with focal amp; 1q, 8q, 8p11 gain; 8p, 16q loss; 11q13.3 amp (51%); 8p11.23 amp (28%)	Most aneuploid; high genomic instability; 1q, 10p gain; 8p, 5q loss; MYC focal gain (40%)	Most aneuploid; high genomic instability; 1q, 8q gain; 8p loss; 17q12 focal ERBB2 amp (71%)
DNA mutations	PIK3CA (49%); TP53 (12%); GATA3 (14%); MAP3K1 (14%)	TP53 (32%); PIK3CA (32%); MAP3K1 (5%)	TP53 (84%); PIK3CA (7%)	TP53 (75%); PIK3CA (42%); PIK3R1 (8%)
DNA methylation	—	Hypermethylated phenotype for subset	Hypomethylated	—
Protein expression	High oestrogen signalling; high MYB; RPPA reactive subtypes	Less oestrogen signalling; high FOXM1 and MYC; RPPA reactive subtypes	High expression of DNA repair proteins, PTEN and INPP4B loss signature (pAKT)	High protein and phospho-protein expression of EGFR and HER2

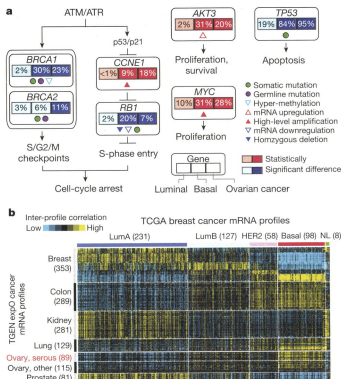
Percentages are based on 466 tumour overlap list. Amp, amplification; mut, mutation.

(Fig. 5). Comparing copy number landscapes, we observed several common features between ovarian and basal-like tumours including widespread genomic instability and common gains of 1q, 3q, 8q and 12p, and loss of 4q, 5q and 8p (Supplementary Fig. 20A). Using a more global copy number comparison, we examined the overall fraction of the genome altered and the overall copy number correlation of ovarian cancers versus each breast cancer mRNA subtype

(Supplementary Fig. 20A, B); in both cases, basal-like tumours were the most similar to the serous ovarian carcinomas.

We systematically looked for other common features between serous ovarian and basal-like tumours when each was compared to luminal. We identified: (1) *BRCA1* inactivation; (2) *RB1* loss and cyclin E1 amplification; (3) high expression of *AKT3*; (4) *MYC* amplification and high expression; and (5) a high frequency of *TP53* mutations (Fig. 5a). An additional supervised analysis of a large, external multitumour type transcriptomic data set (Gene Expression Omnibus accession GSE2109) was performed where each TCGA (The Cancer Genome Atlas) breast tumour expression profile was compared via a correlation analysis to that of each tumour in the multitumour set. Basal-like breast cancers clearly showed high mRNA expression correlations with serous ovarian cancers, as well as with lung squamous carcinomas (Fig. 5b). A PARADIGM analysis that calculates whether a gene or pathway feature is both differentially activated in basal-like versus luminal cancers and has higher overall activity across the TCGA ovarian samples was performed; this identified comparably high pathway activity of the HIF1- α /ARNT, MYC and FOXM1 regulatory hubs in both ovarian and basal-like cancers (Supplementary Fig. 20C). The common findings of *TP53*, *RB1* and *BRCA1* loss, with *MYC* amplification, strongly suggest that these are shared driving events for basal-like and serous ovarian carcinogenesis. This suggests that common therapeutic approaches should be considered, which is supported by the activity of platinum analogues and taxanes in breast basal-like and serous ovarian cancers.

Given that most basal-like cancers are TNBCs, finding new drug targets for this group is critical. Unfortunately, the somatic mutation repertoire for basal-like breast cancers has not provided a common target aside from *BRCA1* and *BRCA2*. Here we note that ~20% of basal-like tumours had a germline ($n = 12$) and/or somatic ($n = 8$) *BRCA1* or *BRCA2* variant, which suggests that one in five basal-like patients might benefit from PARP inhibitors and/or platinum compounds^{53,54}. The copy number landscape of basal-like cancers showed multiple amplifications and deletions, some of which may provide therapeutic targets (Supplementary Table 6). Potential targets include losses of *PTEN* and *INPP4B*, both of which have been shown to sensitize cell lines to PI(3)K pathway inhibitors^{55,56}. Interestingly, many of the components of the PI(3)K and RAS-RAF-MEK pathways were amplified (but not typically mutated) in basal-like cancers including *PIK3CA* (49%), *KRAS* (32%), *BRAF* (30%) and *EGFR* (23%). Other RTKs that are plausible drug targets and amplified in

**Figure 5 | Comparison of breast and serous ovarian carcinomas.**

a, Significantly enriched genomic alterations identified by comparing basal-like or serous ovarian tumours to luminal cancers. b, Inter-sample correlations (yellow, positive) between gene transcription profiles of breast tumours (columns; TCGA data, arranged by subtype) and profiles of cancers from various tissues of origin (rows; external 'TCGA expO' data set, GSE2109) including ovarian cancers.

some basal-like cancers include *FGFR1*, *FGFR2*, *IGF1R*, *KIT*, *MET* and *PDGFRα*. Finally, the PARADIGM identification of high HIF1-α/ARNT pathway activity suggests that these malignancies might be susceptible to angiogenesis inhibitors and/or bioreductive drugs that become activated under hypoxic conditions.

Concluding remarks

The integrated molecular analyses of breast carcinomas that we report here significantly extends our knowledge base to produce a comprehensive catalogue of likely genomic drivers of the most common breast cancer subtypes (Table 1). Our novel observation that diverse genetic and epigenetic alterations converge phenotypically into four main breast cancer classes is not only consistent with convergent evolution of gene circuits, as seen across multiple organisms, but also with models of breast cancer clonal expansion and *in vivo* cell selection proposed to explain the phenotypic heterogeneity observed within defined breast cancer subtypes.

METHODS SUMMARY

Specimens were obtained from patients with appropriate consent from institutional review boards. Using a co-isolation protocol, DNA and RNA were purified. In total, 800 patients were assayed on at least one platform. Different numbers of patients were used for each platform using the largest number of patients available at the time of data freeze; 466 samples (463 patients) were in common across 5 out of 6 platforms (excluding RPPA) and 348 patients were in common on 6 out of 6 platforms. Technology platforms used include: (1) gene expression DNA microarrays²⁵; (2) DNA methylation arrays; (3) miRNA sequencing; (4) Affymetrix SNP arrays; (5) exome sequencing; and (6) reverse phase protein arrays. Each platform, except for the exome sequencing, was used in a *de novo* subtype discovery analysis (Supplementary Methods) and then included in a single analysis to define an overall subtype architecture. Additional integrated across-platform computational analyses were performed including PARADIGM¹³ and MEMO⁴⁴.

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Author Information All of the primary sequence files are deposited in GCGH (<https://gcrh.nci.nih.gov/>); all other data including mutation annotation file are deposited at the Data Coordinating Center (<http://cancergenome.nih.gov/>). Sample files, data matrices and supporting data can be found at http://tcga-data.nci.nih.gov/docs/publications/bcrca_2012/. The data can be explored via the ISB Regulome Explorer (<http://explorer.cancerregulome.org/>) and the cBio Cancer Genomics Portal (<http://cbioportal.org/>). Data descriptions can be found at <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/tx/tcga/>. TCGA/ATC-A Data 1-Primer and in Supplementary Methods. Reprints and permissions information is available at www.nature.com/reprints. This paper is distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-Share Alike licence, and the online version of this paper is freely available to all readers. The authors declare no competing financial interests; details are available in the online version of the paper. Readers are welcome to comment on the online version of the paper. Correspondence and requests for materials should be addressed to C.M.P. (cprou@med.unc.edu).

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Two stellar-mass black holes in the globular cluster M22

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Hundreds of stellar-mass black holes probably form in a typical globular star cluster, with all but one predicted to be ejected through dynamical interactions^{1–3}. Some observational support for this idea is provided by the lack of X-ray-emitting binary stars comprising one black hole and one other star ('black-hole/X-ray binaries') in Milky Way globular clusters, even though many neutron-star/X-ray binaries are known⁴. Although a few black holes have been seen in globular clusters around other galaxies^{5,6}, the masses of these cannot be determined, and some may be intermediate-mass black holes that form through exotic mechanisms⁷. Here we report the presence of two flat-spectrum radio sources in the Milky Way globular cluster M22, and we argue that these objects are black holes of stellar mass (each ~ 10 – 20 times more massive than the Sun) that are accreting matter. We find a high ratio of radio-to-X-ray flux for these black holes, consistent with the larger predicted masses of black holes in globular clusters compared to those outside⁸. The identification of two black holes in one cluster shows that ejection of black holes is not as efficient as predicted by most models^{1,2,4}, and we argue that M22 may contain a total population of ~ 5 – 100 black holes. The large core radius of M22 could arise from heating produced by the black holes⁹.

We have obtained very deep radio continuum images of the Milky Way globular cluster M22 (NGC 6656) with the Karl G. Jansky Very Large Array (VLA). The principal goal of the observations was to search for a possible central intermediate-mass black hole via synchrotron emission from the accretion of intracluster gas; no central source was found¹⁰. However, we serendipitously detected two previously unknown radio continuum sources in the core of the cluster (Fig. 1). We term the sources M22-VLA1 and M22-VLA2. Both sources have flat radio spectra and are unresolved at our $\sim 1''$ resolution.

The core radius of M22 is uncommonly large for a Milky Way globular cluster, namely, ~ 1.24 pc (ref. 11). These sources are well inside the cluster core, at projected radii of 0.4 pc and 0.25 pc for M22-VLA1 and M22-VLA2, respectively. The next source of comparable flux density is far outside the core, at a projected radius of 2.4 pc. These sources have no counterparts in shallow archival Chandra X-ray imaging. On the basis of these non-detections, the sources are constrained to have X-ray luminosities $L_X \leq 2.2 \times 10^{30}$ erg s⁻¹ over 3–9 keV at the distance of M22¹². The radio luminosities of the sources at 8.4 GHz are $L_R \approx 6 \times 10^{27}$ erg s⁻¹, assuming flat spectra. Therefore, if the sources are not variable, the limit of radio to X-ray luminosity is $\log(L_R/L_X) \gtrsim -2.6$.

The radio luminosity, L_R/L_X ratio and central location of the sources place significant constraints on their nature. The most likely explanation is that both sources are accreting stellar-mass black holes in M22. Other possibilities, all of which we consider unlikely, are discussed in Supplementary Information. These objects are the first strong candidates for stellar-mass black holes in any Milky Way globular cluster, and the first stellar-mass black holes to be discovered through radio emission rather than via X-rays¹³.

The radio emission implies that the black holes are actively accreting, and the flat radio spectra are consistent with relatively low accretion rates¹⁴ ($\lesssim 2$ –3% of the Eddington rate). Because globular clusters have modest amounts of interstellar gas, it is very unlikely that the radio luminosity can be explained by Bondi accretion. Thus the objects cannot be black-hole/black-hole binaries, and instead are probably in binary systems with Roche lobe-overflowing companions. Stellar-mass black holes, ~ 5 – 100 times the solar mass, $M_\odot$, offer the best explanation for the presence of multiple sources close to the cluster centre; objects more massive than the average cluster star will sink to the centre because of mass segregation.

To look for optical counterparts of the radio sources, we used archival Hubble Space Telescope (HST) imaging of M22, for which photometric catalogues are available¹⁵. Figure 2 shows that M22-VLA1 is a close match (0.05'') to a moderately low-mass ($\sim 0.34 M_\odot$) main sequence M dwarf in M22, as inferred from standard stellar isochrones (see Supplementary Information for more details). M22-VLA2 is 0.17''

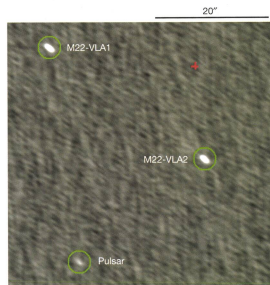


Figure 1 | VLA radio continuum image of the core of the globular cluster M22. The two bright circled objects are the sources identified as stellar-mass black holes, M22-VLA1 and M22-VLA2. These sources have flux densities of 55–58 μ Jy at 5.9 GHz. We obtained the data in two separate 1-GHz-wide basebands centred at 5 and 6.75 GHz, allowing a measurement of the spectral index of the radio emission between these frequencies. Both sources have flat radio spectra, with $\alpha = 0$ – 0.2 , assuming $S_\nu = \nu^\alpha$ (here S_ν is flux density, and ν is frequency). The faint circled object is a known millisecond pulsar²⁷. A red cross marks the photometric cluster centre. 20'' corresponds to approximately 0.3 pc at the distance of M22. The apparent elongation of the sources is due entirely to the elongated synthesized beam; all three circled sources are unresolved. North is up and east is to the left in this image.

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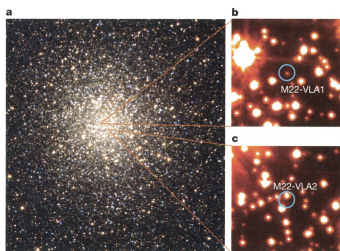


Figure 2 | Optical images of M22 and the candidate companion stars to the radio sources. **a**, Ground-based image that shows the approximate location of the sources in the context of the star cluster. **b**, **c**, The zoomed-in location of the radio sources (**b**, M22-VLA1; **c**, M22-VLA2) on an archival high-resolution HST/Advanced Camera for Surveys F814W image. Each blue circle has a radius of $0.3''$ for clarity; the uncertainty in the astrometric matching of the optical and radio data is $<0.1''$. The image orientation is as in Fig. 1. (Image credit for **a**: D. Matthews/A. Block/NOAO/AURA/NSF.)

from the nearest detected star, which is a $\sim 0.62 M_{\odot}$ main sequence star. Considering the distribution of stars in the inner $30''$ of the cluster, the probability of a chance coincidence as close as for M22-VLA1 is only 2%; for M22-VLA2 it is 26%. Thus we consider the optical association for source M22-VLA1 suggestive, but that for M22-VLA2 uncertain. However, for the case of M22-VLA1, there is an additional complication: because the average stellar mass in the core is greater than that of the putative companion, the low-mass main sequence star would probably be exchanged out of the binary in a three-body interaction with another star⁴. On the other hand, because of the low central density of M22¹¹ ($<10^4 M_{\odot} \text{ pc}^{-3}$), a binary with a low-mass companion might survive longer than in a typical globular cluster. Nonetheless, it is possible that both radio sources are associated with low-luminosity objects below the detection limit of the HST data, such as white dwarfs.

Stellar-mass black holes with accretion rates below $\sim 2\%$ of the Eddington rate¹⁶ (in the so-called low/hard state) follow an empirical correlation between radio and X-ray luminosity with a scatter of a factor of about two (ref. 17). Figure 3 shows this correlation with the M22 data overplotted. The radio–X-ray relation predicts an X-ray luminosity of 10^{31} – $10^{32} \text{ erg s}^{-1}$ for this radio luminosity^{18,19}, above the completeness limit of the archival Chandra data. There are several plausible explanations for this discrepancy. First, there is the possibility of variability. The X-ray data were taken in 2005, six years earlier than the radio data. Field stellar-mass black holes in the low/hard state show substantial (typically a factor of 2–10) variability in both radio and X-rays^{20,21}. Therefore, concurrent radio and X-ray data are necessary for precise constraints on L_R/L_X . We found marginal evidence for radio variability in M22-VLA2 on the timescale of a week; more details can be found in Supplementary Information. Another plausible explanation is that there is larger scatter in the radio–X-ray correlation at very low accretion rates. Only a single known black-hole binary has a measured radio luminosity as faint as our sources¹⁸, and there is evidence that some stellar-mass black holes with low X-ray luminosities may not fall on the correlation¹⁹.

An intriguing possibility is that these sources have high values of L_R/L_X because they are more massive than typical stellar-mass black holes in the field. The radio–X-ray correlation for stellar-mass black holes is a special case of a ‘fundamental plane’ for black-hole accretion in the low/hard state that includes the black-hole mass as a third

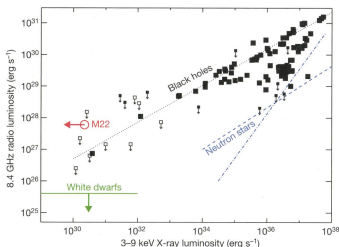


Figure 3 | Radio–X-ray correlation for stellar-mass black holes. The M22 sources have properties more consistent with black holes than with neutron stars or white dwarfs. Filled squares represent simultaneous radio and X-ray data; open squares are non-simultaneous measurements, the positions of which might have been affected by variability. Upper limits are also shown. Some objects have multiple measurements plotted that represent different phases of accretion. The open red circle represents both M22-VLA1 and M22-VLA2, which have very similar luminosities. The dotted black line represents the published correlation¹⁸ $L_R \propto L_X^{0.38}$, normalized by a least-squares fit to the simultaneous detections with $L_X < 2 \times 10^{34} \text{ erg s}^{-1}$. The dashed and dot-dashed blue lines show two possible radio–X-ray correlations for accreting neutron stars; this relation is poorly constrained by observations²³. The solid green line shows the maximum radio continuum luminosity observed for accreting white dwarfs²⁹. Neither neutron stars nor white dwarfs have properties consistent with the M22 radio sources. More information can be found in Supplementary Information.

parameter²². In this relation, more massive black holes have larger values of L_R/L_X . If our sources have masses of ~ 15 – $20 M_{\odot}$ rather than the 5 – $10 M_{\odot}$ typical of field stellar-mass black holes²³, then their X-ray luminosities should be lower than predicted by the correlation in Fig. 3 by a factor of ~ 2 – 3 . It is reasonable to expect that black holes in globular clusters will be more massive than those in the field. Field black holes with measured dynamical masses are all in binary systems, and were probably affected by mass transfer during a common envelope stage that reduced the mass of the resulting black holes²⁴. This need not be the case in globular clusters, because black holes can form as single objects or in wide binaries, and then be exchanged into pre-existing binaries or tidally capture companions owing to the high stellar densities²⁵. Globular cluster black holes also form at lower metallicity than in the field, leading to less mass loss from the progenitor and thus more massive remnants²⁶.

As mentioned above, the location of stars in a cluster also gives information about their masses. Stellar-mass black holes will mass-segregate to the core of the cluster. This process can be used to roughly estimate their masses by assuming thermalization, for which this relation holds¹: $m_{\text{BH}}/m_{\star} = (r_{\text{c}}/r_{\text{BH}})^2$, where m_{BH} and r_{BH} are the characteristic black-hole mass and radius, $m_{\star}$ is the typical stellar mass, and r_{c} is the core radius. Assuming $m_{\star} = 1 M_{\odot}$ in the segregated cluster core and taking the observed values of $r_{\text{c}} = 1.24 \text{ pc}$ and $r_{\text{BH}} = 0.33 \text{ pc}$, we estimate $m_{\text{BH}} \approx 15 M_{\odot}$.

The existence of black holes in a low-density globular cluster such as M22 constrains the magnitude of the initial velocity kicks received by the black holes at birth. The current central escape velocity of M22¹¹ is $\sim 34 \text{ km s}^{-1}$. This value may have been higher in the past, owing to a larger cluster mass and a more compact structure. Nonetheless, the retention of two black holes in a globular cluster with a modest escape velocity implies that the black holes could not have received large natal kicks. Large kicks are inferred for some stellar-mass black holes in the field²⁶. Low kick velocities can originate from supernovae if the

black-hole mass is large, or if the black holes form from direct collapse with no supernovae. In either case, higher black-hole masses are favoured.

The presence of black holes in a globular cluster can lead to an expansion of the core radius through interactions between black holes and stars. This could explain why M22 has the fifth-largest core radius among luminous ($\geq 2 \times 10^5 L_{\odot}$) Milky Way globular clusters¹¹. Additional discussion can be found in Supplementary Information. Most theoretical models in the literature predict that only a single black hole (or black-hole/black-hole binary) will survive the dynamical processes by which black holes mass-segregate to the cluster centre, form an unstable subcluster, and evaporate^{1,2,4}. In some cases, more than one black hole may temporarily survive for an additional black-hole relaxation time (< 1 Gyr), if the extra black holes are kicked into orbits outside the core³. Additional discussion can be found in Supplementary Information.

In contrast to these^{1,2,4} theoretical predictions, M22 contains more than one black hole. In fact, it is possible that more than two black holes are present in M22, either as single black holes or in binary systems that are not undergoing observable mass transfer. Under the uncertain assumption that both of the M22 sources are black-hole/white-dwarf binaries, published calculations can be used to estimate the fraction of surviving black holes that are actively accreting in present-day globular clusters²⁵. Over 10 Gyr, 2–40% of black holes are expected to become members of binary systems with observable accretion. Our two observed sources thus suggest a total population of ~ 5 –100 black holes in M22.

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Author Information Reprints and permissions information is available at www.nature.com/reprints. The authors declare no competing financial interests. Readers are welcome to comment on the online version of the paper. Correspondence and requests for materials should be addressed to J.S. (strader@pa.msu.edu).

Comet-like mineralogy of olivine crystals in an extrasolar proto-Kuiper belt

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Some planetary systems harbour debris disks containing planetesimals such as asteroids and comets¹. Collisions between such bodies produce small dust particles², the spectral features of which reveal their composition and, hence, that of their parent bodies. A measurement of the composition of olivine crystals ($\text{Mg}_{2-2x}\text{Fe}_x\text{SiO}_4$) has been done for the protoplanetary disk HD 100546 (refs 3, 4) and for olivine crystals in the warm inner parts of planetary systems. The latter compares well with the iron-rich olivine in asteroids^{5,6} ($x \approx 0.29$). In the cold outskirts of the β Pictoris system, an analogue to the young Solar System, olivine crystals were detected⁷ but their composition remained undetermined, leaving unknown how the composition of the bulk of Solar System cometary olivine grains compares with that of extrasolar comets^{8,9}. Here we report the detection of the 69-micrometre-wavelength band of olivine crystals in the spectrum of β Pictoris. Because the disk is optically thin, we can associate the crystals with an extrasolar proto-Kuiper belt a distance of 15–45 astronomical units from the star (one astronomical unit is the Sun–Earth distance), determine their magnesium-rich composition ($x = 0.01 \pm 0.001$) and show that they make up 3.6 ± 1.0 per cent of the total dust mass. These values are strikingly similar to those for the dust emitted by the most primitive comets in the Solar System^{8–10}, even though β Pictoris is more massive and more luminous and has a different planetary system architecture.

The olivine crystals found in the Itokawa asteroid and in ordinary chondrites (types 4 to 6) have an iron-rich composition⁵ ($x \approx 0.29$). In contrast, laboratory measurements of olivine crystals from unequilibrated bodies such as comet 81P/Wild 2 and cometary interplanetary dust particles show that these crystals have a range of compositions, but the distribution has a pronounced and sharp peak at the almost-pure magnesium-rich composition with $x \approx 0.01$ (refs 8, 9). Both laboratory experiments¹¹ and observations^{3,4} show that crystal formation in protoplanetary disks by gas-phase condensation, thermal annealing and shock heating results in magnesium-rich crystalline olivine^{12–16} ($x < 0.1$). During the protoplanetary disk phase, these olivine crystals are incorporated into planetesimals. An example of a planetary system in which the olivine crystals are then freed from such planetesimals by collisions is the system of β Pictoris. This system is a young (~ 12 Myr) analogue to the Solar System, with at least one planet at a distance of ~ 10 au and a dusty debris disk containing small dust grains^{17–20} (Fig. 1).

We have detected (Fig. 1) the 69- μm spectral band of small (~ 2 - μm ; see Supplementary Information), crystalline olivine grains in the planetary system of β Pictoris using Herschel²¹ PACS²². The 69- μm band is of special interest because its exact peak wavelength

and width are sensitive to both the grain temperature and, in particular, the composition of the olivine crystals^{23,24} (Fig. 2). From our model fitting of the 69- μm band and spectral bands at shorter wavelengths (Fig. 1), the temperature and total mass of the crystals are determined

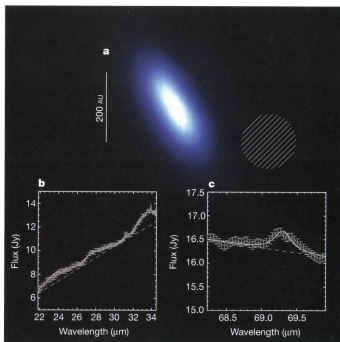


Figure 1 | Photometric and spectral observations of the planetary system of β Pictoris. **a**, Resolved surface brightness map of the β Pictoris debris disk at 70 μm taken with the Herschel Space Observatory's²¹ Photodetector Array Camera and Spectrometer²² (PACS). The disk is barely resolved with PACS, which has a point-spread function with a full-width at half-maximum of $8.2''$ (hatched circle). **b**, Spitzer Space Telescope infrared spectrograph spectrum showing prominent olivine features⁷ (solid grey). The white solid line is our best model fit and the grey dashed line is the continuum. The uncertainties (1σ) in the Spitzer data⁷ are indicated in the figure. **c**, The flux-corrected PACS spectrum with error bars (1σ) showing the 69- μm band of crystalline olivine (solid grey; 12σ detection). The white solid line shows the model fit to the 69- μm band of crystalline olivine as described in Supplementary Information, and the dashed grey line shows the underlying dust continuum. The best model contains crystalline olivine ($\text{Mg}_{2-2x}\text{Fe}_x\text{SiO}_4$) with $x = 0.01 \pm 0.001$ (1σ) and a temperature of 85 ± 6 K (1σ).

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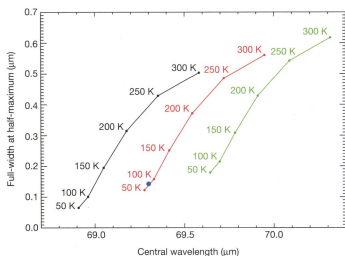


Figure 2 | Diagram demonstrating the dependence of the 69- μ m band on grain temperature and composition. The diagram gives the width and central wavelength of the 69- μ m band for six temperatures and for crystalline olivine ($\text{Mg}_{2-x}\text{Fe}_x\text{SiO}_4$) with $x = 0.0$ (black), $x = 0.01$ (red) and $x = 0.02$ (green). The width and central wavelength are measured by fitting Lorentzian profiles to laboratory measurements^{33,24} of crystalline olivine at different temperatures and compositions (see Supplementary Information for additional information). The width and wavelength positions measured show how the band broadens and shifts as a function of temperature or iron content. The best model fit of the 69- μ m band of β Pictoris is indicated with a solid blue dot (Fig. 1b, c, white solid line); that is, the olivine crystals are cold (85 ± 6 K) and contain about 1% iron ($x = 0.01 \pm 0.001$).

to be 85 ± 6 K and $(2.8 \pm 0.8) \times 10^{23}$ g, respectively. The exact wavelength position of the 69- μ m band indicates very magnesium-rich crystalline olivine ($x = 0.01 \pm 0.001$ (1 σ)). The fraction of olivine crystals to the total amount of dust (obtained from the spectral energy distribution; see Supplementary Information) is $3.6 \pm 1.0\%$ (1 σ). The temperature of 85 ± 6 K (1 σ) places the population of olivine crystals between 15 and 45 AU from the central star, which coincides with a strong increase in surface density in the disk²⁵. This location is outside the snow line of the system, where icy, comet-like bodies can exist, such as in the Kuiper belt of the Solar System. Scaling the distances in the β Pictoris system to those of the Solar System according to the different luminosities of the two central stars, the extrasolar Kuiper belt of β Pictoris reaches into the temperature range of the Jupiter–Saturn region. We propose that this location is an inward extension of what will in time become an analogue of the Kuiper belt of the Solar System.

The composition of the olivine crystals around β Pictoris is strikingly similar to that found in cometary bodies in the Solar System. From the low iron content, we can conclude that the olivine crystals we observe in β Pictoris come from collisions between unequilibrated, relatively small (<10-km) comet-like bodies⁵. The magnesium-rich olivine crystals around β Pictoris are in stark contrast to the iron-rich crystalline olivine³ ($x = 0.29$) found in asteroid-like bodies in the Solar System. When we compare the crystalline olivine abundance found in β Pictoris ($3.6 \pm 1.0\%$) to that of primitive comets in the Solar System, similar low values are found. The comets 17P/Holmes and 73P/Schwassmann–Wachmann, for example, contain about ~ 2 –10% crystalline olivine compared with the total amount of dust^{10,26,27}. Because olivine crystals can be formed only within 10 AU of the central star^{12–15} there must have been a transportation mechanism to bring these crystals to Kuiper belt distances. Studies of crystalline material and gas have indeed shown that radial mixing has taken place in both the Solar System and disks around young stars^{28,29}. Models are able to predict crystalline olivine abundances of 2–58% at radii beyond 10 AU on timescales of ~ 1 Myr (refs 12, 30). The similar crystalline olivine abundances in β Pictoris and Solar System comets suggest that radial

mixing must have been at work during the formation of the β Pictoris planetary system, with an efficiency similar to that in the protosolar nebula.

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Author Contributions B.L.d.V. analysed the data, performed the modelling and wrote the manuscript; B.A. was heavily involved in designing the study, doing the analysis,

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discussion and in writing the manuscript. The rest of the authors all contributed equally to obtaining the observations, having scientific discussions and in commenting on the manuscript.

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Stabilizing Rabi oscillations in a superconducting qubit using quantum feedback

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The act of measurement bridges the quantum and classical worlds by projecting a superposition of possible states into a single (probabilistic) outcome. The timescale of this ‘instantaneous’ process can be stretched using weak measurements^{1,2}, such that it takes the form of a gradual random walk towards a final state. Remarkably, the interim measurement record is sufficient to continuously track and steer the quantum state using feedback^{3–5}. Here we implement quantum feedback control in a solid-state system, namely a superconducting quantum bit (qubit) coupled to a microwave cavity⁶. A weak measurement of the qubit is implemented by probing the cavity with microwave photons, maintaining its average occupation at less than one photon. These photons are then directed to a high-bandwidth, quantum-noise-limited amplifier^{10,11}, which allows real-time monitoring of the state of the cavity (and, hence, that of the qubit) with high fidelity. We demonstrate quantum feedback control by inhibiting the decay of Rabi oscillations, allowing them to persist indefinitely¹². Such an ability permits the active suppression of decoherence and enables a method of quantum error correction based on weak continuous measurements^{3,14}. Other applications include quantum state stabilization^{4,7,15}, entanglement generation using measurement¹⁶, state purification¹⁷ and adaptive measurements^{18,19}.

Feedback protocols in classical systems, from antilock brakes to pacesetters, use the outcome of a measurement to stabilize the system about a desired state. The operation of such feedback protocols is predicated on the idea that measurement does not alter the state of the system. This is no longer true in quantum mechanics, where measurement is necessarily invasive¹. In the Copenhagen interpretation, a quantum object can exist simultaneously in more than one eigenstate of the measurement operator until observed—Schrödinger’s celebrated ‘dead-and-alive’ cat being the quintessential hypothetical example²⁰. The reality of the situation is established by the act of measurement, which forces the system ‘instantaneously’ into one of these eigenstates in a probabilistic fashion (the ‘measurement back-action’). Therefore, this back-action must be accounted for when developing a feedback protocol to stabilize a quantum system, such as a qubit.

One solution is to use weak measurements^{1,2}, where the rate (Γ_{meas}) at which information is extracted is deliberately limited, thereby slowing down the qubit’s random walk towards an eigenstate. Integral to this scheme is a detector with efficiency $\eta_{\text{det}} = \Gamma_{\text{meas}}/\Gamma_{\phi} \approx 1$, where Γ_{ϕ} is the ensemble-averaged dephasing rate due to measurement back-action²¹. The high detector efficiency allows us to track the qubit continuously, and steer it to a desired state using real-time feedback.

The experimental set-up is shown in Fig. 1. Our quantum system (Fig. 1b) is an anharmonic oscillator realized by a capacitively shunted Josephson junction, dispersively coupled to a three-dimensional microwave cavity²². We use its two lowest energy levels to form a qubit (transmon²³) with a transition frequency of $\omega_{01}/2\pi = 5.4853$ GHz. The cavity resonant frequency with the qubit in the ground state is $\omega_c/2\pi = 7.2756$ GHz. The strongly coupled output port sets the cavity linewidth $\kappa/2\pi = 13.4$ MHz, and control and measurement signals are injected via the weakly coupled input port (Fig. 1a, b). The qubit–cavity

coupling results in a state-dependent phase shift ($\Delta\phi = 2\pi^{-1}(2\chi/\kappa) = 12^\circ$, $\chi/2\pi = 0.687$ MHz) of the cavity output field^{22,24}, with the state information contained in one quadrature of the signal. The cavity output is sent to a near-noiseless ($\eta_{\text{det}} \approx 1$) phase-sensitive parametric

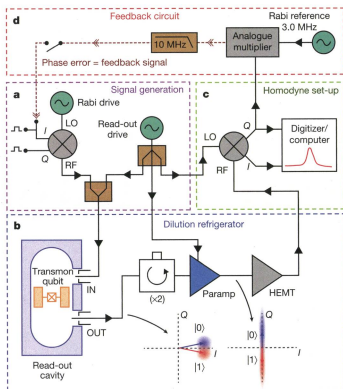


Figure 1 | Experimental set-up. **a**, Signal generation set-up. One generator provides the Rabi drive at the a.c. Stark-shifted qubit frequency ($\omega_{01} - 2\chi\hbar$), and the output of another generator at 7.2749 GHz is split to create the measurement signal, param drive and local oscillator. The relative amplitudes and phases of these three signals are controlled by variable attenuators and phase shifters (not shown). **b**, Simplified version of the cryogenic part of the experiment; all components are at 30 mK (except for the high-electron-mobility transistor (HEMT) amplifier, which is at 4 K). The combined qubit and measurement signals enter the weakly coupled cavity port, interact with the qubit and leave from the strongly coupled port. The output passes through two isolators (which protect the qubit from the strong param drive), is amplified and then continues to the demodulation set-up. The coherent state at the output of the cavity for the ground and excited states is shown schematically before and after parametric amplification. **c**, **d**, The amplified signal is homodyne-detected and the two quadratures are digitized (**c**). The amplified quadrature (**Q**) is split off and sent to the feedback circuit (**d**), where it is multiplied with the Rabi reference signal. The product is low-pass-filtered and fed back to the I/Q mixer in **a** to modulate the Rabi drive amplitude.

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amplifier^{10,11} (paramp), which boosts the relevant quadrature to a level compatible with classical circuitry. The paramp output is further amplified and homodyne-detected (Fig. 1c) such that the amplified quadrature (Q) contains the final measurement signal.

We obtain Rabi oscillations with the cavity continuously excited at $\omega_0/2\pi = 7.249$ GHz ($\omega_0 = \omega_c - \gamma$) with a mean cavity photon occupation ($\bar{n}$) that controls the measurement strength (see Supplementary Information, section II, for calibration of $\bar{n}$). The Rabi drive at the a.c. Stark-shifted²⁵ qubit frequency ($\omega_{01} - 2\gamma\bar{n}$) is turned on for a fixed duration, τ_m . The amplitude is adjusted to yield a Rabi frequency of $\Omega_R/2\pi = 3$ MHz. First we average 10^4 measurement traces to obtain a conventional ensemble-averaged Rabi oscillation trace (Fig. 2a). Even though the qubit is continuously oscillating between its ground and excited states, the oscillation phase diffuses, primarily owing to measurement back-action. As a result, the averaged oscillation amplitude decays over time, but the frequency domain response retains a signature of these oscillations²⁶. We Fourier-transform the individual measurement traces and plot the averaged spectrum (Fig. 2b, blue trace). A peak, centred at 3 MHz and with a full-width at half-maximum of $\Gamma/2\pi$, is observed and remains unchanged even when τ_m is much longer than the decay time of the ensemble-averaged oscillations. A plot of $\Gamma/2\pi$ for different measurement strengths (in units of $\bar{n}$) is shown in Fig. 2c. As expected in the dispersive regime, Γ and $\bar{n}$ are linearly related²⁵. The vertical offset is dominated by pure environmental dephasing, $\Gamma_{\text{env}}/2\pi$, but has contributions from qubit relaxation (T_1) and thermal excitation into higher qubit levels; more details can be found in Supplementary Information, sections II and IV(C).

The ratio of the height of the Rabi spectral peak to the height of the noise floor has a theoretical maximum value of four²⁷, corresponding to an ideal measurement with overall efficiency $\eta = 1$. For our set-up, this efficiency can be separated into two contributions as $\eta = \eta_{\text{det}}\eta_{\text{env}}$. The detector efficiency is given by $\eta_{\text{det}} = (1 + 2n_{\text{add}})^{-1}$, with n_{add} being the number of noise photons added by the amplification chain. The

added noise is referenced to the output of the cavity and includes the effect of signal attenuation between the cavity and the paramp. The effect of environmental dephasing, Γ_{env} , is modelled using $\eta_{\text{env}} = (1 + \Gamma_{\text{env}}/\Gamma_0)^{-1}$. The best measurement efficiency we obtain experimentally is $\eta = 0.40$, with $\eta_{\text{det}} = 0.46$ and $\eta_{\text{env}} = 0.87$; more details can be found in Supplementary Information, section III.

We now discuss the quantum feedback protocol, which is motivated by the classical phase-locked loop used for stabilizing an oscillator. The amplified quadrature is multiplied by a Rabi reference signal with frequency $\Omega_0/2\pi = 3$ MHz using an analogue multiplier (Fig. 1d). The output of this multiplier is low-pass-filtered and yields a signal proportional to the sine of the phase difference, θ_{err} , between the 3-MHz reference and the 3-MHz component of the amplified quadrature. This 'phase error' signal is fed back to control the Rabi frequency Ω_R by modulating the Rabi drive strength with an upconverting IQ mixer (Fig. 1a). The amplitude of the reference signal controls the dimensionless feedback gain, F , through the expression $\Omega_R/\Omega_0 = -F\sin(\theta_{\text{err}})$, where Ω_R is the change in Rabi frequency due to feedback. Figure 2d shows the ensemble-averaged, feedback-stabilized oscillation, which persists for much longer than the original oscillation in Fig. 2a. In fact, within the limits imposed by our maximum data acquisition time of 20 ms, these oscillations persist indefinitely. The red trace in Fig. 2b shows the corresponding averaged spectra. The needle-like peak at 3 MHz is the signature of the stabilized Rabi oscillations.

To confirm the quantum nature of the feedback-stabilized oscillations, we perform state tomography on the qubit²⁸. We stabilize the dynamical qubit state, stop the feedback and Rabi driving after a fixed time ($80 \mu\text{s} + \tau_{\text{wait}}$ after starting the Rabi drive), and then measure the projection of the quantum state along one of three orthogonal axes. This is done using strong measurements (by increasing $\bar{n}$) with high single-shot fidelity¹¹. This allows us to remove any data points where the qubit was found in the second excited state (Supplementary Information, section IV(C)). By repeating this many times, we can determine $\langle\sigma_X\rangle$, $\langle\sigma_Y\rangle$ and $\langle\sigma_Z\rangle$,

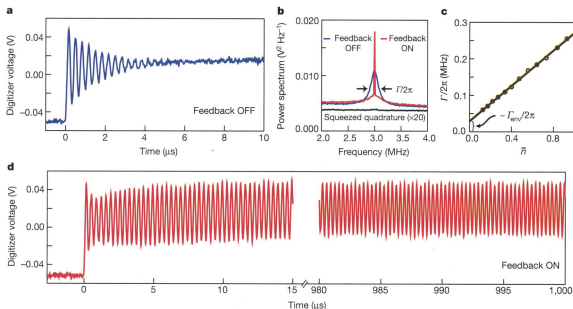


Figure 2 | Rabi oscillations and feedback. **a**, We average 10^4 measurement traces using weak continuous measurement and simultaneous Rabi driving to obtain ensemble-averaged Rabi oscillations that decay in time as a result of ensemble dephasing. **b**, Averaged Fourier transforms of the individual measurement traces from **a**. The spectrum shows a peak at the Rabi frequency (blue trace) with a full-width at half-maximum of $\Gamma/2\pi$. The grey trace shows an identically prepared spectrum for the squeezed quadrature (multiplied by 20 for clarity), which contains no qubit state information. **c**, $\Gamma/2\pi$ plotted as a function of cavity photon occupation, $\bar{n}$ (measurement strength), showing the

expected linear dependence. The vertical offset is dominated by pure environmental dephasing, $\Gamma_{\text{env}}/2\pi$, but has contributions from qubit relaxation (T_1) and thermal excitation into higher qubit levels. **d**, Feedback-stabilized, ensemble-averaged Rabi oscillations, which persist for much longer times than those without feedback (**a**). The corresponding spectrum, shown in **b**, has a needle-like peak at the Rabi reference frequency (red trace). The slowly changing mean level in the Rabi oscillation traces in **a** and **d** is due to the thermal transfer of population into the second excited state of the qubit. See Supplementary Information, section IV(C), for more details.

the three components of the Bloch vector for the ensemble qubit state. Figure 3a shows a plot of the Bloch vector components for different time points (τ_{tomo}) over one oscillation period ($2\pi\Omega_0$). The Y and Z components are well fitted by a sinusoidal function, whereas the X component is nearly zero as expected for a coherent Rabi oscillation about the X axis. The imperfect efficiency of the feedback process is reflected in the non-unit amplitude of these oscillations. This feedback efficiency, D , is given by the time-averaged scalar product of the desired and actual state vectors on the Bloch sphere (Supplementary Information, section IV(A)). In our experiment, the measurement is weak enough that the stabilized oscillations are sinusoidal and D is approximately equal to the amplitude of these oscillations.

In Fig. 3b, we plot D (red squares) versus the dimensionless feedback gain, F . We find a maximum value of $D = 0.45$ for the optimal choice of F . Ideally, feedback efficiency improves with measurement strength ($\eta_{\text{env}} \rightarrow 1$) but requires correspondingly larger feedback loop bandwidth. Thus, in the presence of finite feedback bandwidth and loop delay, there exists an optimal measurement strength, which for our experiment was $\Gamma/2\pi = 0.134$ MHz. The dashed black line in Fig. 3b is a plot of the theoretical expression for D , given by

$$D = 2 \left(\frac{1}{\eta} \frac{F}{\Gamma\Omega_0} + \frac{\Gamma/\Omega_0}{F} \right)^{-1} \quad (1)$$

and is derived using a simple analytical theory based on the Bayesian formalism for the qubit state trajectory (Supplementary Information, section IV(A)). This expression does not account for finite feedback bandwidth, loop delays in the circuit or qubit relaxation. The maximum value, $D_{\text{max}} = \sqrt{\eta}$, is obtained for an optimal feedback gain of $F_{\text{opt}} = \sqrt{\eta} \Gamma / \Omega_0$. A value of $D_{\text{max}} < 1$ implies that the stabilized state is a mixed state; this occurs for $\eta < 1$, implying that we have incomplete information about the qubit state. To account for the finite loop delay (250 ns), feedback bandwidth (10 MHz) and qubit relaxation ($T_1 = 20 \mu\text{s}$), we performed full numerical simulations of the Bayesian equations for qubit evolution (Supplementary Information, section IV(B)). The results are shown as a black solid line in Fig. 3b and agree well with our experimental data.

In our experiment, even though the system being controlled is quantum and subject to measurement back-action, we essentially treat it as a classical oscillator and successfully apply a feedback protocol based completely on classical intuition. This can be done because the feedback signal achieves near-perfect cancellation of the random measurement back-action for optimal F . Although it is not true in general, in this particular scheme improvements in the feedback efficiency from full reconstruction of the quantum state⁸ are small. Furthermore, it is possible to approach a pure state with $D = 1$ by ensuring that $\eta = 1$ and eliminating feedback loop delay.

We have demonstrated a continuous analogue feedback scheme to stabilize Rabi oscillations in a superconducting qubit, allowing them to persist indefinitely. The efficiency of the feedback is limited primarily by signal attenuation and loop delay, and could be improved in the near future with the development of on-chip paramps and cryogenic electronics to lessen the effects of attenuation and delay, respectively. We anticipate that our present technology can be extended to entangled qubits to provide another route to quantum error correction based on weak continuous measurements^{13,14}. Such methods might be advantageous in architectures where strong measurements can cause qubit state mixing²⁹. This development may be the start of a new era of measurement-based quantum control for solid-state quantum information processing^{6,7,15–19}.

METHODS SUMMARY

The transmon qubit was fabricated on a bare, high-resistivity Si wafer using electron-beam lithography and double-angle aluminium evaporation with an intervening oxidation step. The qubit is a single Josephson junction connecting two rectangular paddles ($420 \mu\text{m} \times 600 \mu\text{m}$) that provide the shunting capacitance and coupling to the cavity. The cavity was machined out of 6061 aluminium alloy. The quality factor of the cavity was adjusted by controlling the length of the centre conductor of the SMA coaxial connector protruding into the cavity volume. These lengths were chosen to give strong coupling at the output port and weak coupling at the input port, resulting in a net power transmission on resonance of -20 to -30 dB. Qubit rotations around the X and Y axes of the Bloch sphere for state tomography were performed using resonant microwave pulses. The strong measurement used in state tomography was implemented with a 800-ns read-out pulse with an amplitude corresponding to a mean qubit occupation of $\bar{n}=11$.

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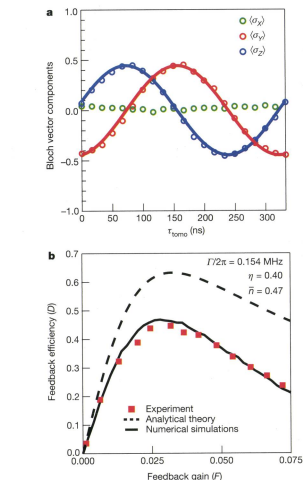


Figure 3 | Tomography and feedback efficiency. a, Quantum state tomography of the feedback-stabilized state. We plot $\langle \sigma_x \rangle$, $\langle \sigma_y \rangle$ and $\langle \sigma_z \rangle$ for different time points τ_{tomo} in one full Rabi oscillation of the qubit. The solid lines are sinusoidal fits. The magnitude of these sinusoidal oscillations is approximately equal to the feedback efficiency, $D = 0.45$. b, D plotted as a function of the dimensionless feedback gain, F . Solid red squares show experimental data with a maximum value of $D = 0.45$. The dashed black line is a plot of equation (1) with $\eta = 0.40$ and $\Gamma/2\pi = 0.154$ MHz ($\bar{n} = 0.47$, $\Gamma_{\text{env}}/2\pi = 0.020$ MHz), whereas the solid black line is obtained from full numerical simulations of the Bayesian equations including finite loop delay (250 ns) and feedback bandwidth (10 MHz).

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Author Contributions R.V., C.M. and D.H.S. performed the experiment, which is based on a proposal by A.N.K. R.V. analysed the data, performed numerical simulations and wrote the manuscript. S.J.W. and K.W.M. fabricated the qubit and cavity. R.N. helped with cavity design by performing electromagnetic simulations. A.N.K. provided theoretical support and helped with numerical simulations. All authors helped in editing the manuscript. All work was carried out under the supervision of I.S.

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Sulphate–climate coupling over the past 300,000 years in inland Antarctica

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Sulphate aerosols, particularly micrometre-sized particles of sulphate salt and sulphate-adhered dust, can act as cloud condensation nuclei, leading to increased solar scattering that cools Earth's climate^{1,2}. Evidence for such a coupling may lie in the sulphate record from polar ice cores, but previous analyses of melted ice-core samples have provided only sulphate ion concentrations, which may be due to sulphuric acid³. Here we present profiles of sulphate salt and sulphate-adhered dust fluxes over the past 300,000 years from the Dome Fuji ice core in inland Antarctica. Our results show a nearly constant flux of sulphate-adhered dust through glacial and interglacial periods despite the large increases in total dust flux during glacial maxima⁴. The sulphate salt flux, however, correlates inversely with temperature, suggesting a climatic coupling between particulate sulphur and temperature. For example, the total sulphate salt flux during the Last Glacial Maximum averages $5.78 \text{ mg m}^{-2} \text{ yr}^{-1}$, which is almost twice the Holocene value. Although it is based on a modern analogue with considerable uncertainties when applied to the ice-core record, this analysis indicates that the glacial-to-interglacial decrease in sulphate would lessen the aerosol indirect effects on cloud lifetime and albedo, leading to an Antarctic warming of 0.1 to 5 kelvin.

The climate of the past 430 kyr is guided by large-amplitude 100-kyr glacial–interglacial cycles⁵. Such cycles are triggered by the Earth's orbital changes and then amplified by various land–atmosphere interactions⁶. Of these, the influence of aerosol radiative forcing¹ is particularly hard to quantify accurately. The low aerosol concentrations of the southern high-latitude region make the direct effect of aerosol radiative forcing negligible, but the indirect effect, in which the aerosol acts as cloud condensation nuclei (CCN), could be meaningful^{6,7}. Many CCN consist of sulphate salt, either by itself or mixed with silicate materials⁸ (Supplementary Fig. 1), which after precipitating to the ground can be preserved in the ice.

Aerosols in the Antarctic region contain little anthropogenic and ammonium sulphates⁹, instead being dominated by sulphuric acid (H_2SO_4), sodium sulphate (Na_2SO_4) and calcium sulphate⁹ (CaSO_4). The Na_2SO_4 arises mostly from the reaction of sodium chloride (NaCl) with H_2SO_4 that comes mainly from marine biological activity¹⁰. The CaSO_4 arises from terrestrial gypsum and also from a reaction in aerosol between H_2SO_4 and calcium carbonate¹⁰. These salts primarily form during their transport through the atmosphere¹¹. Once in the ice, sulphate salts are good proxies for past atmospheric chemistry because, unlike the more mobile, volatile compounds such as nitric acid¹² (HNO_3) and liquid H_2SO_4 (ref. 8), they are largely unaffected by post-depositional processes.

Analyses^{3,13} of the sulphate ion (SO_4^{2-}) record in Antarctic ice cores show that almost all non-seasalt sulphate ions in inland Antarctic ice cores come from marine biological activity¹³. However, because the ice samples were melted before measurement, those studies could not definitively separate the H_2SO_4 flux from the sulphate salt (Na_2SO_4

and CaSO_4) flux. Even less is known about how much of the sulphate salt mixed with silicate mineral dust. Here we present a complete record of the sulphate salt and sulphate-adhered dust fluxes into inland Antarctica over the past 300 kyr.

To determine the sulphate salt and seasalt fluxes (by sea salt we mean only NaCl), we combined two methods: an ion analysis method³, here applied to the 300-kyr record in the Dome Fuji ice core, and an elemental and compositional analysis of single particles extracted from the same ice record, using a sublimation method^{11,14}.

We found that particles (Supplementary Fig. 2) in glacial inception and interglacial periods can be distinguished from those in glacial maxima by their $\text{Na}_2\text{SO}_4/\text{CaSO}_4$ and $\text{NaCl}/\text{Na}_2\text{SO}_4$ mass ratios. During glacial maxima, $\text{Na}_2\text{SO}_4/\text{CaSO}_4$ values are particularly low, whereas $\text{NaCl}/\text{Na}_2\text{SO}_4$ values are high (Fig. 1). With a squared correlation coefficient of $r^2 = 0.76$ and a regression slope close to 1 (0.85 ± 0.17 in Supplementary Fig. 3), the $\text{Na}_2\text{SO}_4/\text{CaSO}_4$ mass ratio correlates well with that³ from the ion chromatograph analyses.

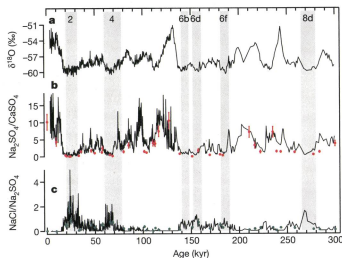


Figure 1 | Oxygen isotope and salt mass ratios of the past 300 kyr (before AD 2000) in the Dome Fuji ice core. **a**, Oxygen isotope ratio of ice (expressed as $\delta^{18}\text{O} = (^{18}\text{O}/^{16}\text{O})_{\text{sample}} / (^{18}\text{O}/^{16}\text{O})_{\text{standard}} - 1$, where the standard is Vienna Standard Mean Ocean Water) from ref. 27 ($n = 691$; uncertainty, $<0.1\text{‰}$). Grey bars indicate glacial maxima (Marine Isotope Stages 2, 4, 6b, 6d, 6f and 8d). **b**, $\text{Na}_2\text{SO}_4/\text{CaSO}_4$ salt mass ratio from the energy-dispersive spectroscopy (EDS) method (single-particle analysis) applied to 38 filter samples (solid circles) and measured from ion concentrations²⁷ of 691 melt samples (line). Vertical error bars are uncertainties (coefficient of variation) in the EDS ratios. Numerical values are in Supplementary Information. The uncertainty in the ion-derived ratios ranges from 36 to 49% for average glacial and interglacial conditions. **c**, Same as **b** except data shows the $\text{NaCl}/\text{Na}_2\text{SO}_4$ salt mass ratio. The uncertainty in the ion-derived ratios ranges from 34 to 19% for average glacial and interglacial conditions.

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Because the ion-deduced CaSO_4 flux is well confirmed from the relation between Ca^{2+} and particle components^{14,19} in the Dome Fuji ice core, we can confidently use the ion-deduced Na_2SO_4 and CaSO_4 fluxes. The regression slope of $\text{NaCl}/\text{Na}_2\text{SO}_4$ equals 0.84 (Supplementary Fig. 3), which, considering the $\text{Na}_2\text{SO}_4/\text{CaSO}_4$ slope of 0.85, indicates that the ion chromatograph method underestimated the NaCl flux by up to 29% ($1 - 0.85 \times 0.84$). This underestimate may be due to a poor understanding of mixed nitrate and chloride salt formation²⁰. Nevertheless, the high correlation ($r^2 = 0.73$) suggests that the NaCl variations during the 300-kyr time series can be reconstructed well.

The resulting ion-chromatograph-derived CaSO_4 and NaCl fluxes to the ground surface vary greatly over the past 300 kyr, both showing high values during glacial maxima (Fig. 2). The high CaSO_4 flux agrees with the high dust flux from South America during these stages^{4,16}, which suggests that the higher dust flux increases Ca^{2+} sulphatization and thus consumes more H_2SO_4 in the atmosphere¹⁷.

During interglacials, both the NaCl flux and the Na_2SO_4 flux are low, probably because the reaction between NaCl and H_2SO_4 to produce Na_2SO_4 is limited by the low NaCl flux^{8,17}. Moreover, the $\text{NaCl}/\text{Na}_2\text{SO}_4$ ratio is low during interglacials and glacial inception but high in glacial maxima (Fig. 1), a trend predicted by the reaction between NaCl and H_2SO_4 (ref. 17). A low ratio in interglacials and glacial inceptions indicates excess H_2SO_4 in the Antarctic atmosphere (Fig. 2), causing the sulphate salt flux to be controlled mainly by seasalt flux⁹. However, a high ratio in glacial maxima indicates excess seasalt flux⁹, causing the sulphate salt flux to be controlled mainly by H_2SO_4 flux. Consistent with this interpretation, we measured very little H_2SO_4 during glacial maxima (Fig. 2), as nearly all SO_4^{2-} was associated with sulphate salt. In contrast, during interglacial periods and

glacial inceptions, the H_2SO_4 contribution is relatively high, meaning that the SO_4^{2-} flux is not a good measure of the sulphate salt flux during these periods.

We also estimated the flux of sulphate-adhered dust, that is, particles with both silicon and sulphate. Such particles probably act as CCN^{6,18} and thus influence climate. We refer to the collection of all particles containing silicon as the 'total dust', which is often measured in ice-core studies¹⁶. Because the total dust flux correlates to the non-seasalt calcium ion flux^{3,4}, we examined the time variation of the ratio of sulphate-adhered dust to total dust in comparison with the ratio of sulphate salt flux to non-seasalt calcium ion flux (Supplementary Fig. 4). These ratios are correlated, both being high during glacial inceptions but low during glacial maxima. We use this correlation together with the measured total-dust flux from the melt samples to obtain the sulphate-adhered dust flux.

The sulphate-adhered dust flux averages $0.10 \text{ mg m}^{-2} \text{ yr}^{-1}$ through glacial and interglacial periods (Fig. 3a). This constant trend occurs despite the total dust flux increasing by a factor of 50 (up to $\sim 5 \text{ mg m}^{-2} \text{ yr}^{-1}$) between interglacials and glacial maxima. Because of the constant trend, no significant correlation occurs between temperature and sulphate-adhered dust flux, suggesting that the sulphate-adhered dust has little influence on the glacial and interglacial temperature changes via the indirect effect of CCN.

In contrast to that of the sulphate-adhered dust, the sulphate salt flux (another measure of CCN) correlates inversely with $\delta^{18}\text{O}$, a temperature proxy (Fig. 3b). This correlation suggests a coupling between temperature and particulate sulphur (through Na_2SO_4 and CaSO_4). The higher sulphate salt flux at lower temperatures also contrasts with the SO_4^{2-} flux, which shows no clear correlation with temperature¹.

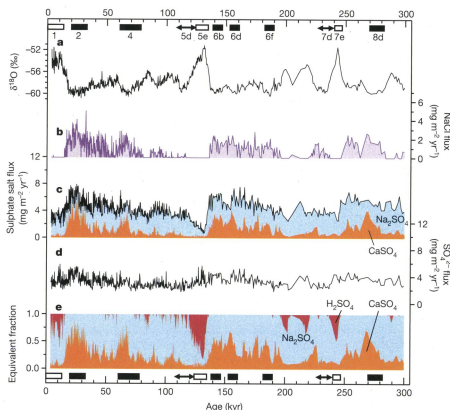


Figure 2 | Sulphate ion and salts fluxes. **a**, Isotopic data as in Fig. 1a. Marine Isotope Stages 1–8d are indicated at top. Open boxes (1, 5e and 7e) are interglacials, arrows (5d and 7d) are glacial inceptions and filled boxes (2, 4, 6b, 6d, 6f and 8d) are glacial maxima. **b**, NaCl flux from ion concentration measurements²⁷ after being verified by the single-particle (EDS) measurements. The uncertainty in the NaCl flux is 17% for average glacial conditions and 10% for interglacial conditions. **c**, Cumulative salt fluxes from ion concentration

measurements²⁷ after being verified by EDS measurements. Na_2SO_4 , blue; CaSO_4 , orange. The Na_2SO_4 flux uncertainty ranges from 17 to 10% for average glacial and interglacial conditions; the corresponding values for CaSO_4 range from 19 to 39%. **d**, The sulphate ion (SO_4^{2-}) flux²⁷. The uncertainty in the SO_4^{2-} flux ranges from 17 to 5.7% for average glacial and interglacial conditions. **e**, Fractional contribution of sulphuric acid (H_2SO_4) and sulphate salt (Na_2SO_4 plus CaSO_4) to the total sulphur flux.

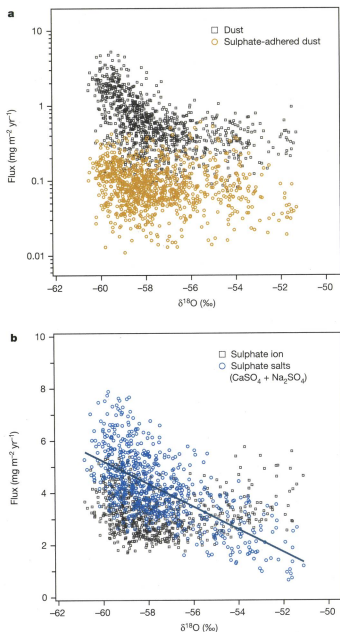


Figure 3 | Correlations of relevant fluxes to the temperature proxy $\delta^{18}\text{O}$.

a, Sulphate-adhered and total dust fluxes²⁸. The uncertainty in the sulphate-adhered dust flux ranges from 31 to 58% for average glacial and interglacial conditions; the corresponding values for the total dust flux are 17 to 14%. **b**, Sulphate ion and sulphate salt fluxes. The linear best-fit line for sulphate salts is $\text{Flux} = -0.44\delta^{18}\text{O} - 20.9$ with $r^2 = 0.42$ ($n = 691$). The correlation is significant ($P < 0.001$). (For sulphate ions, a linear fit gives an r^2 value of only 0.005). The uncertainty in the sulphate ion flux ranges from 17 to 5.7% for average glacial and interglacial conditions; for the sulphate salt flux, the range is 17 to 12%.

For the relatively warm interglacial periods, including the Holocene epoch, the evidence here suggests that Na_2SO_4 is generally controlled by the flux of sea salt from the ocean, which is relatively low. But in glacial maxima, the seasalt and dust fluxes increase, leading to greater particulate sulphur flux. (The flux of sulphate salt exceeds that of SO_4^{2-} because the salt has a higher molar mass.) During such cold periods, the amount of particulate sulphur is limited by the amount of SO_4^{2-} . This SO_4^{2-} comes from marine biogenic sulphur¹³, and marine biological activity thus influences the amount of sulphate salt.

The coupling shown here between temperature and sulphate salt flux provides new evidence against which to test the long-debated¹⁹

hypothesis of Charlson *et al.*²⁰ (CLAW). They proposed that marine biogenic sulphur provides a negative feedback to climate change. Such a feedback requires the sulphur to have a controlling effect on CCN production and requires biogenic sulphur production to respond to climate. Concerning the first requirement, a recent review¹⁹ shows that sulphur does not control CCN in the present interglacial period. Our evidence from the three most recent interglacials agrees with this view because our data indicate that sea salt rather than marine sulphur controls particulate sulphate flux. However, during glacial maxima, the greater sulphate salt flux is determined by the marine sulphur flux, which agrees with the first requirement. However, the CLAW negative feedback requires that the greater sulphate salt flux decreases marine sulphur emissions as a consequence of changes in cloud albedo and surface temperature, which is inconsistent with our finding that SO_4^{2-} flux does not decrease during glacial maxima (Fig. 3). Thus, the second CLAW requirement seems to fail even during glacial maxima.

The correlation between temperature and sulphate salts suggests that the sulphate salts have an indirect aerosol effect on glacial-interglacial temperature changes. To obtain a rough estimate of the radiative forcing caused by the flux change of sulphate salt, we use recent radiative modelling results. To do so, we note that the ratio of sulphate concentration during the Holocene to that during the Last Glacial Maximum roughly equals the ratio of pre-industrial anthropogenic sulphate emissions to present anthropogenic sulphate emissions^{11,22} (Supplementary Fig. 5), and we assume that the sulphate salt concentration changes globally. This assumption is consistent with the finding that the change of dust flux in Antarctica correlates strongly with global dust flux²³.

The resulting model gives net sulphate-induced radiative coolings in the Last Glacial Maximum of -1.85 W m^{-2} (ref. 24) and -2.57 W m^{-2} (ref. 25), producing global climate coolings of 0.1 (ref. 24) and 0.24 K (ref. 25). By applying the polar amplification factor²⁶ (1.3–2.3), the resulting cooling in Antarctica ranges from 0.1 to 5 K as a result only of the indirect aerosol effect. The value 5 K is probably overestimated because other reports² suggest lower radiative cooling. Considering that the temperature change between the Last Glacial Maximum and the Holocene in Antarctica is $\sim 8^\circ\text{C}$ (ref. 26), our estimate highlights the large uncertainty in the climatic impact of indirect aerosol effects from sulphate salts. Thus, the role of sulphate salts and sulphate-adhered dust in producing the indirect effect should be quantified using palaeoclimate models with our new aerosol data and other proxies (for example temperature, CO_2 , CH_4 and total dust) archived in the ice core.

METHODS SUMMARY

To determine the amount of sulphate, chloride and mineral particles in the Dome Fuji ice core, we used a low-temperature sublimation and particle analysis method^{11,14} and compared the results with an analysis⁷ based on ion chromatography data obtained previously²⁷. That analysis determines the salt fluxes of CaSO_4 , Na_2SO_4 plus MgSO_4 , and NaCl plus MgCl_2 from ion concentrations. Results from the two methods agreed well for CaSO_4 and the Na_2SO_4 -plus- MgSO_4 fluxes (Supplementary Fig. 3).

The sublimation method removes volatiles such as H_2O , HCl , HNO_3 and H_2SO_4 (refs 11, 14). In total, we sublimated 38 sampled sections over the 300-kyr period and analysed them using scanning electron microscopy/energy-dispersive spectroscopy. Each sample yielded several hundred particles exceeding $0.4 \mu\text{m}$ in diameter (16,821 particles in total). To determine whether the particles had a mineral, a sulphate or a chloride component, we used a scheme from previous studies^{11,14} that divides non-volatile particles into insoluble and soluble components. We assumed that sodium and sulphur in a given particle came from Na_2SO_4 , whereas sodium and chlorine came from NaCl and calcium and sulphur came from CaSO_4 . Then we calculated the $\text{Na}_2\text{SO}_4/\text{NaCl}$ and $\text{Na}_2\text{SO}_4/\text{CaSO}_4$ mass ratios following the method described in ref. 11. To obtain the number ratio of sulphate-adhered dust to total silicate dust particles, we assumed that a particle with both sulphur and silicon was sulphate-adhered dust and divided the number of such particles by the total number of particles with silicon. Supplementary Information lists the uncertainties.

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Supplementary Information is available in the online version of the paper.

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Author Contributions Y.I. ran the experiments and analysed data on statistical methods. Y.I., R.U., T.S., H.M. and T.H. discussed the results and commented on the manuscript. T.M. and M.H. provided the dust and ion data. Y.I. and R.U. wrote the paper. Y.I., H.M. and T.H. provided financial resources.

Author Information Reprints and permissions information is available at www.nature.com/reprints. The authors declare no competing financial interests. Readers are welcome to comment on the online version of the paper. Correspondence and requests for materials should be addressed to Y.I. (iizuka@lowtem.hokudai.ac.jp).

Natural and anthropogenic variations in methane sources during the past two millennia

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Methane is an important greenhouse gas that is emitted from multiple natural and anthropogenic sources. Atmospheric methane concentrations have varied on a number of timescales in the past, but what has caused these variations is not always well understood^{1–6}. The different sources and sinks of methane have specific isotopic signatures, and the isotopic composition of methane can therefore help to identify the environmental drivers of variations in atmospheric methane concentrations⁷. Here we present high-resolution carbon isotope data ($\delta^{13}\text{C}$ content) for methane from two ice cores from Greenland for the past two millennia. We find that the $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ content underwent pronounced centennial-scale variations between 100 BC and AD 1600. With the help of two-box model calculations, we show that the centennial-scale variations in isotope ratios can be attributed to changes in pyrogenic and biogenic sources. We find correlations between these source changes and both natural climate variability—such as the Medieval Climate Anomaly and the Little Ice Age—and changes in human population and land use, such as the decline of the Roman empire and the Han dynasty, and the population expansion during the medieval period.

In the pre-industrial period, methane (CH_4) sources can be divided into three categories on the basis of their stable carbon isotopic signatures: biogenic sources (for example, wetlands, rice paddies and ruminants, mean $\delta^{13}\text{C} = -60 \pm 5\text{‰}$), geological sources¹⁰ (for example, mud volcanoes and microseeps, mean $\delta^{13}\text{C} = -38 \pm 7\text{‰}$) and pyrogenic sources (for example, fires, biofuel and coal burning, mean $\delta^{13}\text{C} = -22 \pm 3\text{‰}$)^{1–3,9}. The isotopic composition of CH_4 in the troposphere is affected by emissions from these sources and by isotope fractionation in the sink mechanisms, primarily $\text{OH}^\bullet$ oxidation, with minor contributions from soil removal and stratospheric loss¹.

Previous measurements of the $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ value of CH_4 from air trapped in Antarctic ice cores challenged our understanding of the behaviour of pre-industrial CH_4 sources^{1,2}. They indicate that before AD 1500, the contribution of ^{13}C -enriched CH_4 sources (for example, biomass burning) had to be larger than expected for pre-industrial conditions in order to explain the generally high $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ levels during this period^{1,3}. After AD 1500, $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ decreased by 2‰ until AD 1800, followed by an abrupt increase presumably caused by increased fossil fuel emissions associated with the onset of industrialization^{1,3}. Several hypotheses have been proposed to explain the $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ minimum around AD 1800, including a decline in anthropogenic biomass burning in the Americas concurrent with colonial expansion¹, an early rise of ^{13}C -depleted agricultural sources³ or a combination of both².

Our high-resolution $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ data from the NEM (North Greenland Eemian Ice Drilling programme) and EUROCORE ice cores (see Methods) allow a more detailed reconstruction of global-scale changes in CH_4 sources over the past two millennia (Fig. 1a). Whereas the most distinctive feature of the isotopic record over this period is the minimum around AD 1800 (in agreement with previous studies^{1,2}),

our measurements also reveal three centennial-scale excursions in $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ between 100 BC and AD 1600 that were not resolved earlier (Fig. 1a). These excursions are superimposed on a slightly declining long-term trend in $\delta^{13}\text{C}$, which is accompanied by a long-term increase in CH_4 mixing ratios of about 70 p.p.b. between 100 BC and AD 1600 as observed in both Northern Hemisphere and Southern Hemisphere records^{4–7} (Fig. 1b).

We use a two-box model (see Supplementary Information) to infer possible source/sink variations that are consistent with the observed $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ and CH_4 data. In a first step, we vary single sources individually to identify the most important contributors to the isotope variations. The results show that the long-term increase in CH_4 mixing ratios of 70 p.p.b. (corresponding to a source change of 28 Tg CH_4 between 100 BC and AD 1600) cannot originate from geological and pyrogenic sources only, but must be primarily driven by changes in biogenic emissions (Supplementary Fig. 2), in agreement with recent model studies^{1,3}. The three centennial-scale $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ excursions (Fig. 1a) could be caused by either a relative increase in the ^{13}C -enriched sources (pyrogenic or geological sources) or a decrease in the ^{13}C -depleted

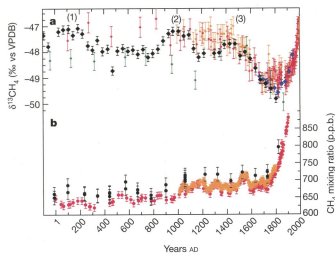


Figure 1 | Records of $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ and mixing ratio of CH_4 over the past two millennia. **a**, $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ measurements on air trapped in Greenland ice cores from NEM (black diamonds; this study), EUROCORE (blue diamonds; this study), GISP2²¹ (green diamonds) and Antarctic ice cores from Law Dome¹ (red diamonds) and the WAIS divide² (orange diamonds). (1), (2) and (3) correspond to the three excursions in the Northern Hemisphere $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ record (see main text). **b**, CH_4 mixing ratio records from Greenland (GRIP²⁶; black circles) and Antarctica (Law Dome¹, red circles; WAIS², orange circles). Each data point represents one measurement. Error bars represent $\pm 1\sigma$, based on the reproducibility of the measurement systems.

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sources (biogenic sources). We consider short-term fluctuations in geologic emissions to be unlikely, so our discussion simplifies to biogenic versus pyrogenic sources. The additional constraint that no clear corresponding signal is observed in the CH_4 mixing ratio implies that the isotope variations cannot be explained without variations in pyrogenic sources (Supplementary Fig. 3). Indeed, the larger the difference between the isotopic signature of specific sources and the global mean, the higher its 'isotope leverage', that is, the more effective a change in this source is in changing the overall isotopic composition.

Whereas this single-source approach is suitable for qualitatively identifying the main drivers of the observed variability, it does not help in quantifying simultaneous changes in multiple sources. Thus, in a second step, we mathematically solve the CH_4 and isotope mass balance equations to determine simultaneous variations in the biogenic and the pyrogenic sources that can explain the measured $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ and CH_4 mixing ratio data (see Supplementary Information). This multiple-source change approach shows that the centennial-scale $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ excursions must be related to increased pyrogenic emissions that are balanced by a concomitant decrease in biogenic emissions.

In order to estimate the uncertainties in the reconstructed source variations, an error propagation study was carried out using a Monte Carlo approach. One thousand simulations were performed, in which model input parameters (observation errors, inter-hemispheric difference in CH_4 and in $\delta^{13}\text{C}$, the geological source strength and isotope signatures of the sources) were perturbed randomly within their range of uncertainty (see Supplementary Information). The resulting source reconstructions fall within the light yellow and light green bands in Fig. 2.

In order to further investigate the origin of the reconstructed variations in CH_4 sources, we compared our pyrogenic and biogenic emission scenarios to the Northern Hemisphere charcoal index¹¹ (based on charcoal accumulation measurements in sediments, and thus a good indicator of biomass burning changes in the past), to model-derived fire activity¹², to the rate of deforestation (estimates based on population data, remote sensed images and land census)^{13,14}, to precipitation estimates¹⁵, and to reconstructions of Northern Hemisphere¹⁶ and extratropical Northern Hemisphere (NEXT)¹⁷ temperatures (Fig. 2). The Northern Hemisphere charcoal index¹¹ (Fig. 2c) shows three peaks in biomass burning between 100 BC and AD 1600 that qualitatively coincide in time with the three excursions in $\delta^{13}\text{C}$, but the overall correlation is weak. The rate of deforestation is a good indicator of anthropogenic variations in biomass burning because fire was the primary means for land maintenance and clearance (see Supplementary Information). We calculated pyrogenic CH_4 emissions from fires used to clear land and to maintain cropland (see Supplementary Information and Supplementary Fig. 7). The results show that between 100 BC and AD 1600, human activity may have been responsible for roughly 20–30% of the total pyrogenic CH_4 emissions. The anthropogenic fraction increases over time, whereas natural pyrogenic emissions decreased. It is important to note that our estimates of the area under land use¹³ include intensification of land use due to new agricultural technologies and population pressure in the last centuries. Therefore the overall land use area increased more slowly than population increase in the recent past. Other estimates of anthropogenic fire activity^{12,14} are based on constant per capita land use area. Using these data, CH_4 would scale directly with population, resulting in lower CH_4 emissions from human activity in the past.

The values of $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ are high at the beginning of our record and decrease around AD 200 (Fig. 1), which results in a decrease of pyrogenic sources and an increase in biogenic sources in our source reconstruction (Fig. 2a, b). Both the Northern Hemisphere charcoal index (Fig. 2c) and the NEXT temperature reconstruction¹⁷ (Fig. 2f) show decreasing values during this period, for which data on fire activity and precipitation are not available. The decrease in NEXT temperatures could have led to lower CH_4 emissions from wildfires, but a causal link to increasing wetland emissions is less obvious. The data on the rate of

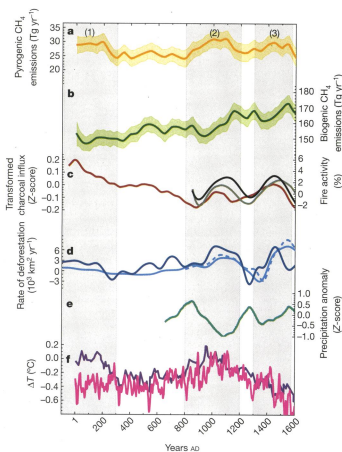


Figure 2 | Reconstructed scenarios for pyrogenic and biogenic CH_4 emissions and other paleoproxies between 100 BC and AD 1600.

Uncertainty envelopes for the source reconstructions are derived from random parameter perturbations in the source inversion (see Supplementary Information). **a, b**, Pyrogenic (**a**) and biogenic (**b**) CH_4 emissions. **c**, Northern Hemisphere transformed charcoal index¹¹ (red curve) and fire activity estimates¹² (model data give percentage of pre-industrial mean) caused by only natural wildfires (grey curve) and by both wildfires and anthropogenic fires (black curve). **d**, Northern Hemisphere rate of deforestation data from KK10¹³ (dark blue), HYDE¹⁴ (light blue solid line) and Pongratz¹⁴ (light blue dashed line). **e**, Northern Hemisphere precipitation anomaly¹⁵. **f**, Northern Hemisphere temperature reconstruction¹⁶ (pink) and Northern Hemisphere extratropical temperature (NEXT) reconstruction¹⁷ (purple). Temperature difference ΔT is with respect to the 1961–90 temperature average. (1), (2) and (3) correspond to the three excursions in the Northern Hemisphere $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ record.

anthropogenic deforestation also show a decrease around AD 200, which is related to drastic population declines in China and Europe following the fall of the Han dynasty and the decline of the Roman empire¹⁷. Rapidly expanding industrial activity between 100 BC and AD 200 in both Europe and East Asia has been reconstructed from heavy-metal pollution detected in a Greenland ice core¹⁸ and sedimentary records¹⁹. During that time, charcoal was the preferred fuel for industrial and domestic purposes, yielding a large source of ^{13}C -enriched CH_4 (ref. 20). Based on archaeological metal production estimates²¹, we calculate that the charcoal used for metal production at the peak of the Roman empire alone could have produced 0.65 Tg yr^{-1} of CH_4 . Contemporary civilizations in China and India had similar populations and even more sophisticated metal industries²¹. Although specific estimates of metal production are highly uncertain, we suggest that this early industrial activity may have contributed a sizeable fraction to the $\sim 5 \text{ Tg yr}^{-1}$ extra pyrogenic CH_4 emissions before AD 200, according to our model calculation.

The second $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ excursion (Fig. 1) correlates very well in timing and duration with the temperature maximum of the Medieval Climate

Anomaly (MCA) that appears in both the Northern Hemisphere and NEXT temperature reconstructions (Fig. 2f) between AD 800 and AD 1200. During this time, our reconstructed scenarios show a temporary decrease in biogenic sources and an increase in pyrogenic sources (Fig. 2). Widespread extended droughts¹⁹ associated with precipitation decrease in Northern Europe (Fig. 2e) provided favourable conditions for enhanced wildfire activity during the MCA. In addition, the medieval period was a time of accelerating deforestation (Fig. 2d) as a result of population expansion and urbanization in Europe and Asia¹³, which coincides in time with the second $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ excursion observed. Fire activity data (Fig. 2c) provide independent support for both natural and anthropogenic contributions to the increased pyrogenic emissions during this period.

Interestingly, during the MCA the isotopic composition of CH_4 implies generally decreasing biogenic emissions. This seems to contradict the idea that high latitude Northern Hemisphere wetland CH_4 emissions acted as a positive climate feedback to increasing Northern Hemisphere temperatures, which would have led to a decrease in $\delta^{13}\text{C}$, contrary to our observations. Increases in methanogenesis rates caused by higher temperatures during this period may have been compensated by decreases in wetland area due to extended droughts²², leading to a net decrease in biogenic CH_4 emissions.

The third maximum in $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ (Fig. 1) occurs simultaneously with the onset of the Little Ice Age (LIA). During this period, Northern Hemisphere temperatures and precipitation decreased (Fig. 2e, f). This may have led to unfavourable conditions for enhanced biogenic emissions. Increased fire activity and charcoal index values during the same period indicate that CH_4 from natural wildfires may have made a significant contribution to the observed $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ excursion. In addition, the rate of deforestation (Fig. 2d) shows an increase that is slightly delayed relative to the third $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ excursion, suggesting more pyrogenic emissions caused by rapid land clearance during this period.

The long-term trend in mixing ratios and $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ values of CH_4 from biogenic sources between 100 BC and AD 1600 (Fig. 1b) can have natural (primarily wetlands^{16,23}) and anthropogenic (primarily agricultural^{23,24}) components. Recent model calculations¹ inferred an orbitally-controlled late Holocene increase in global CH_4 levels, primarily driven by increases of Southern Hemisphere tropical natural wetland emissions, which according to this theory are linked to variability in monsoon patterns during the Holocene²⁵. On the other hand, we show in Fig. 3 that the long-term trend in CH_4 mixing ratio—that is, the increase between

100 BC and AD 1800—is in very good agreement with reconstructed global anthropogenic land use¹³. This suggests that human activities, including the expansion of rice agriculture²⁶, played an important role in the observed long-term CH_4 trend over the past two millennia.

Our new isotopic data from air trapped in Greenland ice cores allow the reconstruction of variations in different CH_4 source categories over the past 2,100 years. The changes seen in our $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ ice core record cannot be explained without variability in biomass burning, which correlates qualitatively with the charcoal index and fire activity data. In addition, we show that the reconstructed source variations are correlated with anthropogenic activities, in particular with long-term increases in agricultural emissions and with varying levels of biomass burning during the period of the Roman empire and the Han dynasty, the MCA and the onset of the LIA. It is thus likely that human activity contributed to variations in CH_4 emissions to the atmosphere long before pre-industrial times.

METHODS SUMMARY

We analysed 47 ice samples from the NEEM ice core (North Greenland: site coordinates 77° 27' N, 51° 4' W) and 9 from the EUROCORE (Summit, Central Greenland: site coordinates: 72° 34' N, 38° 27' W) using a recently developed dry extraction procedure²⁷ followed by isotope ratio mass spectrometry. A layer of ice (3–5 mm) was microtomed from the surface of the ice to exclude contamination from the drilling liquid and possible anomalies caused by post-coring processes. Samples were not measured in chronological order. Contamination due to sample handling during coring and processing of the ice is very unlikely, because all samples were handled in the same manner and the observed $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ variations follow systematic patterns rather than showing an erratic behaviour. No similar temporal patterns are found in the recently obtained dust and ion records of the NEEM core (M. Bigler, personal communication), which makes *in situ* CH_4 formation in the ice also unlikely. Moreover, *in situ* production is very likely to be biogenic and would lead to increases of isotopically depleted CH_4 , which are not observed in our profile.

The precision of the $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ measurements, based on standards and replicate ice core measurements, is 0.12‰. All $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ values are reported versus VPDB (Vienna Pee Dee Belemnite). We corrected our data for an inter-laboratory offset of 0.51‰ between our laboratory and Pennsylvania State University²⁸, as determined in a recent intercalibration exercise using real ice core samples²⁷. In addition, all isotope data were corrected for gravitational settling, and the four shallowest EUROCORE data were corrected for diffusive fractionation²⁹. The age of each ice core air sample was calculated using a delta age (gas age minus ice age) of 183 years for NEEM³⁰ and 210 years for EUROCORE³⁰. Modelled gas age distributions of NEEM and EUROCORE are presented in Supplementary Information.

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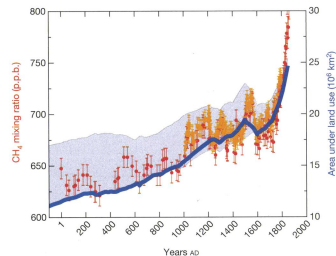


Figure 3 | Comparison between estimate of area under land use and CH_4 mixing ratio. CH_4 mixing ratio records are from the Law Dome³¹ (red circles) and WAIS³² (orange circles) ice cores. The shaded area represents an uncertainty estimate on global area under land use (blue curve, from ref. 13). For details on methods used to construct the land use scenario, see Supplementary Information section 3.

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Supplementary Information is available in the online version of the paper.

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Author Information Reprints and permissions information is available at www.nature.com/reprints. The authors declare no competing financial interests. Readers are welcome to comment on the online version of the paper. Correspondence and requests for materials should be addressed to C.J.S. (c.j.sapart@uu.nl).

Dynamical similarity of geomagnetic field reversals

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No consensus has been reached so far on the properties of the geomagnetic field during reversals or on the main features that might reveal its dynamics. A main characteristic of the reversing field is a large decrease in the axial dipole and the dominant role of non-dipole components^{1–3}. Other features strongly depend on whether they are derived from sedimentary or volcanic records. Only thermal remanent magnetization of lava flows can capture faithful records of a rapidly varying non-dipole field, but, because of episodic volcanic activity, sequences of overlying flows yield incomplete records. Here we show that the ten most detailed volcanic records of reversals can be matched in a very satisfactory way, under the assumption of a common duration, revealing common dynamical characteristics. We infer that the reversal process has remained unchanged, with the same time constants and durations, at least since 180 million years ago. We propose that the reversing field is characterized by three successive phases: a precursory event, a 180° polarity switch and a rebound. The first and third phases reflect the emergence of the non-dipole field with large-amplitude

secular variation. They are rarely both recorded at the same site owing to the rapidly changing field geometry and last for less than 2,500 years. The actual transit between the two polarities does not last longer than 1,000 years and might therefore result from mechanisms other than those governing normal secular variation. Such changes are too brief to be accurately recorded by most sediments.

The individual trajectories of the north virtual geomagnetic poles (VGP) (Fig. 1) derived from the best volcanic records of reversals (Methods) seem to be rather complex. In Fig. 2a and Fig. 2e, the latitudes of the VGP positions of the reverse–normal (R–N) and normal–reverse (N–R) transitions, respectively, are plotted as functions of the respective flow numbers, which are reinitialized at the first transitional direction. There is no consistency between the data from these volcanoes, which have different eruption rates. In an attempt to improve the consistency between the individual records, we next rescaled the lengths of the R–N and N–R records to match those from Maui and, respectively, Tahiti, by selecting two tie points, usually at the first and last transitional directions (Methods), and interpolating linearly between them (Fig. 2b, f). All the

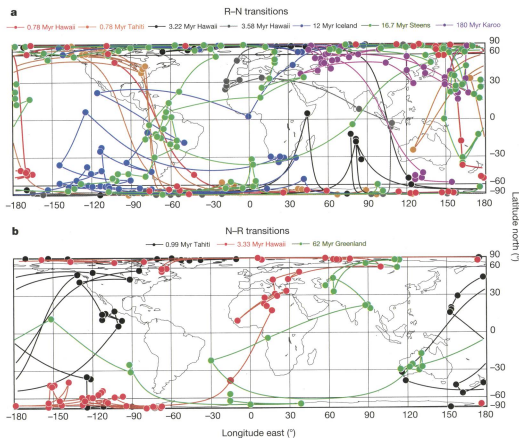


Figure 1 | Paths of VGPs. VGP paths from the most detailed volcanic reversal records^{4,21–29} of R–N (a) and N–R (b) transitions, plotted on cylindrical, equal-area projections to outline the transitional VGP positions. All data were

obtained from large sequences of superimposed lava flows including normal, reverse and at least eight transitional VGP positions.

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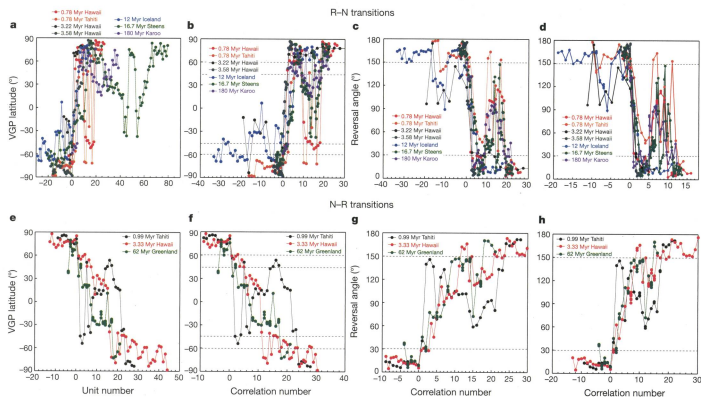


Figure 2 | Dynamical characteristics of the reversal records. VGP latitudes (a, b, e, f) and reversal angles (c, d, g, h) between each successive direction and the local direction of the present geocentric axial dipole field in each sequence of lava flows for R–N (a, b, c, d) and N–R (e, f, g, h) reversals. Dashed lines at VGP latitudes 60° and 45° north and south and at reversal angles 30° and 150° define

numbers defining a given sequence have been multiplied accordingly by a single factor, which is equivalent to tuning all records to a common duration (Supplementary Fig. 1). Strikingly, after this simple linear transformation the entire data set shows a common and consistent dynamical pattern. Likewise the reversal angles (Methods) show the same field evolution (Fig. 2c, g). Many records seem to be punctuated by clusters of non-polar directions that can reflect uncertainties in reversal angles, very rapid field changes or both (Methods). We have assumed that successive directions that differ by less than 7° can be grouped within a single temporal unit. This operation further improves the match between all curves (Fig. 2d, h).

Overall, the combination of these records identifies three successive phases of the reversing field that can be described as a precursor, a rapid transit to the opposite polarity and a final rebound. Precursors are absent from the N–R data set (which is small), because samplings of these sequences did not cover that phase of the reversal. Similarly, the variations in Fig. 2c, d tell us that this first episode was not sampled in four R–N sequences. Three data sets (Iceland, Hawaii and Tahiti) show the entire reversal sequence. There is no rebound recorded by the 12-Myr-old record from Iceland; the three phases are present in the 3.22-Myr-old record from Hawaii despite relatively weak rebound, and there is little indication for a precursor in the 0.78-Myr-old record from Tahiti. The rarity of occurrence of the three phases within a single record can be interpreted in two ways: reversals mostly occur in two phases, either precursor and transit or transit and rebound; or reversals occur in three phases, but there is little chance of recording both the precursor and the rebound at the same site because of the brevity of these successive large amplitude variations due to a rapidly varying non-dipole field. We show below that the second interpretation agrees with our understanding of the behaviour of the non-dipole field over the past few millennia.

During the first and last phases, the reversal angle reaches an amplitude of 90° and the VGP latitude changes by at least 60°. Following

the limits of the transitions. Data plotted as functions of flow numbers reinitialized at the first transitional direction (a, e); common flow number after rescaling (b, c, f, g); and common flow units after assigning the same number to successive directions that do not differ by more than 7° (and have similar VGPs) (d, h).

published simulations^{4,5}, we can refer to the archaeological period to define the duration of similar large-amplitude directional changes due to a weaker dipole in the presence of higher-order multipolar components that retain the same intensity. In Fig. 3a, we plot the angular deviations recorded in the most detailed succession of ¹⁴C-dated flows from the Big Island of Hawaii over the past 4 kyr, first as observed⁶ and then after having reduced the strength of the axial dipole to 10% of its original value (Methods). With the reduced-strength axial dipole, the angular deviations reach a large amplitude of about 90° in a time interval that does not exceed 2.5 kyr. We explored a 10-kyr-long period by using the CALS10k.1b model⁷ (Methods), and plotted its predictions at each sampling reversal site (still with the reduced-strength dipole). As expected, the deviations derived from this global model for Hawaii (Fig. 3a) fit with the data set from the Big Island. There is no deviation (Fig. 3b) lasting longer than 2.5 kyr at any site, with the reduced dipole. Deviations are even frequently much shorter (between 1 and 1.5 kyr) and alternate with returns to normal polarity. This is particularly true during the past 3 kyr of geomagnetic history. Such different field configurations are well reflected in the rebound of the most detailed Steens Mountain⁸ record, in which two large deviations are interrupted by a short return to normal polarity (Fig. 2a–d).

Thus, simulations and data converge to indicate an upper bound of 2.5 kyr for the longest field oscillations in the presence of a very weak axial dipole. This leads us to propose that the maximum durations for the precursor and the rebound are ~2.5 kyr, assuming that, over this time frame, the correlation numbers can be linearly related to time and that this relationship did not change significantly with time. This assumption seems to be justified, because otherwise the correlated records would not match. The opposite situation would imply that the characteristic timescales of secular variation^{9,10} have changed over the past 180 Myr, which is unlikely (Methods). Using this upper bound

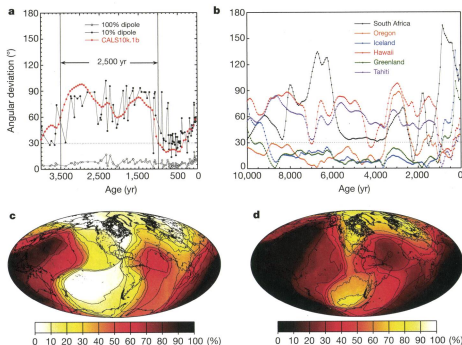


Figure 3 | Secular variation in presence of low axial dipole. **a**, Most-detailed record of secular variation from the Big Island of Hawaii⁶ in terms of angular deviation as a function of time for the past 4 kyr (100% axial dipole, white dots; 10% axial dipole, black dots). The red curve shows the prediction of the CALS10k.1b global model⁷ with the axial dipole reduced to 10%. **b**, Secular variation derived from the CALS10k.1b model⁷ at the reversal sites with 10%

of ~ 2.5 kyr, we infer a maximum duration of about ~ 1.0 kyr for the second phase, that is, the polarity switch itself (Figs 2c and 4a).

There is uncertainty in the time spent by the field in the normal and reverse directions before and after the transit. A large drop in intensity 18 kyr before the last reversal^{12,13} has been interpreted as its precursor¹¹, highlighting the oscillating nature of the field during reversal periods^{14,15}. When intensity is considered, the duration of the reversal seems longer, as dipole intensities of more than 50% of full polarity values do not generate large directional deviations^{4,5}. But we are only concerned here with directional changes directly related to the transitional process. Assuming that the correlation numbers are linearly related to the number of eruptions, the first episode would have ended about 2 kyr before the switch and the rebound would start about 1 kyr after, yielding a duration of about 9 kyr for the entire process (Fig. 4a). For comparison, duration estimates derived from sediments integrate all episodes of the reversing field and range from 2 to 12 kyr (ref. 16). It has also been proposed, on the basis of the same sedimentary database¹⁶, that reversal duration can significantly vary with site latitude. Although not in contradiction with the present results, this hypothesis cannot be tested further given the limited geographical distribution of the volcanic sites. We have constrained the maximum reversal duration with respect to the longest variations of the archaeological non-dipole field. Because the lengths of these changes (Fig. 3b) differ at each site, precursors and rebounds are expected to be frequently shorter than 2.5 kyr (Fig. 3b), yielding a duration for the entire reversal process that is variable but is in all cases shorter than 9 kyr (Fig. 4b).

An important and robust observation is that the polarity switch (phase 2) does not last as long as phases 1 and 3. This could be caused by the dipole being weaker during the switch. However, when the dipole strength in CALS10k.1b is reduced to 10% or is fully suppressed, the spectrum of field variations remains essentially the same (Supplementary Fig. 2). Therefore, field instabilities other than those associated with typical secular variation might be involved in this abrupt phase. Such a short (~ 1 -kyr) duration also implies that sediments with

axial dipole (Methods) over the past 10 kyr. **c**, Map of active zones of secular variation. The colour scale shows the percentage of time over the past 3 kyr spent with an angular deviation larger than 60° with the axial dipole reduced to 10%. **d**, Map of quiet zones of secular variation. The colour scale shows the percentage of time over the past 3 kyr spent with an angular deviation smaller than 30° with a dipole reduced to 10%.

deposition rates that rarely exceed 5 cm kyr^{-1} can hardly have recorded it in a reliable way with at most three transitional samples. In addition, biased transitional directions can be produced by smearing of the signal, which also constrains the VGP paths in longitude^{5,17}. This explains why the complex character of the transitional process cannot be clearly detected in most sedimentary data. The single high-resolution sedimentary reversal record¹⁸ shows no precursor (phase 1); this could be due to site location (Fig. 3c, d). The transit and rebound (phases 2 and 3) have similar durations of 2 and 2.5 kyr, respectively (Supplementary Fig. 3), but smearing of the signal could have increased the length of the transit.

The simulation in Fig. 3b also reveals that several records, especially those from high-latitude sites, do not significantly deviate from normal polarity for long periods of time. This might reflect a lack of resolution inherent to the CALS10k.1b model, particularly for the most ancient times. We can restrict the analysis to the past 3 kyr and evaluate the percentage of time during which the angular deviation over Earth's surface was larger than 60° . The map in Fig. 3c shows that a little under 50% of the sites have angular dispersions exceeding 60° , whereas the rest of the sites, particularly at high northern latitudes, are barely sensitive to the reduction of axial dipole strength. Following a similar approach, we determine the probability of recording two successive large deviations over a 5-kyr time interval and find that two such events may occur only on little more than a third of Earth's surface (Methods). This may explain why the rebound (phase 3) is not well constrained in those records long enough to show the three successive phases.

Another feature in Fig. 2c is that in all cases normal and reverse directions dominate between the three phases of the process. The simulation in Fig. 3d shows that no more than about one-third of the sites have angular dispersions deviating by less than 30° from the axial dipole when only 10% of the axial dipole value remains. Therefore, a strengthened axial dipole may be required to maintain northward or southward directions systematically between the three

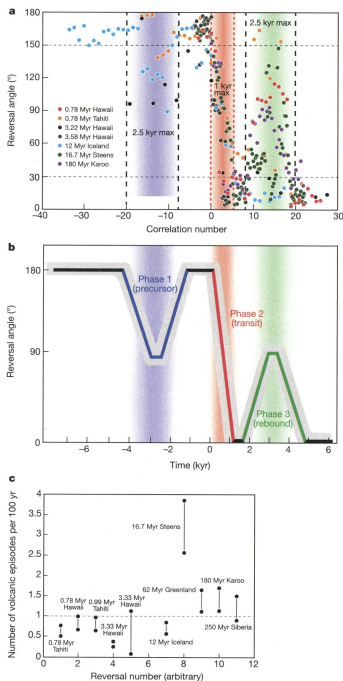


Figure 4 | Reversal timing and eruption rates. **a**, Duration of the successive reversal phases (R–N transitions) derived from Fig. 2c. **b**, Schematic reversal path illustrating the succession of the three phases (precursor, polarity switch and rebound). **c**, Frequency of eruptions derived from each reversal record, based on the duration estimates of the transition. Note the larger values obtained for flood basalts. Records from Tahiti, Hawaii and Iceland are characterized by similar eruption rates, with one lava flow every 100–200 yr, and the eruption frequencies obtained for the Karoo and Greenland flood basalts are about twice as large, with Steens basalts displaying about three eruptions every 100 yr. The 250-Myr-old reversal record from the Siberian traps³¹, which could not be incorporated in our database owing to the scarcity of reverse directions, is also characterized by a higher eruption rate.

phases. The two volcanic records^{19,20} with detailed determinations of absolute palaeo-intensity during the transition and the rebound agree with this.

The coherent pattern of all reversal records indicates that each volcano recorded the same succession of events, with alternating phases of rapid eruptions and quiet periods, at its own resolution.

All magmatic plumbing systems generated at least one lava flow over a time period of about 1 kyr. We attempted to estimate the mean eruption rate of each volcano (Methods) and found (Fig. 4c) that flood basalt provinces²¹ (plume heads) have been significantly more active than present-day hotspot volcanoes (plume tails).

It is interesting to compare the reversal features identified here with the analysis of a polarity reversal in a recent three-dimensional dynamo model driven by thermochemical convection²². The latter reversal is also complex, having a large precursor that reaches the opposite polarity before returning to the vicinity of the original pole, with a short (and incomplete) recovery of dipole intensity. The final step is a rapid polarity change lasting for about 400 yr. Thus, data and simulations are consistent regarding both the duration and the morphology of the precursor and transit phases. There is no rebound in the simulation, whereas it is present in the records (Fig. 2c, d). Detailed analysis of a larger, statistically significant number of simulations of such complex reversals is needed to go any further.

We have shown that the reversal process has apparently remained the same for at least the past 180 Myr and has always featured a brief polarity switch with a precursor and a rebound. The latter two phases are not systematically recorded at all sites because their local occurrence is constrained by large fluctuations of the non-dipole field. The extremely fast transit between the two polarities is consistent with the absence of transitional data in many volcanic records and the general lack of transitional poles at low latitudes. It also implies that the core of the polarity change could be driven by mechanisms other than those involved in normal secular variation. These conclusions should be testable by reference to highly detailed records and place important constraints on theoretical and numerical models of the geodynamo.

METHODS SUMMARY

We selected the volcanic records that include directions corresponding to the two opposite polarities surrounding the transition and at least eight VGPs with latitudes between 60° N and 60° S between the two polarities. Seven records of R–N transitions^{8,23–27} and three records of N–R transitions^{13,28,29} meet these requirements. The ten records span from 180 to 0.78 Myr ago, reflecting a long history of geomagnetic reversals.

The reversal angle denotes the angle between the local magnetic vector and the direction of today's axial dipole field at the site. In Fig. 2c, d, g, h, we favoured this directional characterization of the reversing field (as opposed to the VGP latitude) because it describes the evolution and variability of the local magnetic field vector. To construct Fig. 2d, h, we verified that each cluster of reversal angles corresponded to a cluster of VGPs.

Our estimate of geomagnetic secular variation over the past 10 kyr relies on CALS10k.1b, a global, time-dependent model of the Holocene geomagnetic field⁷ (<http://earthref.org/ERDA/1403/>). The normal (that is, non-transitional) secular variation of this model is representative of the typical normal secular variation over the past 180 Myr. Over this time frame, the available convective power (integrated throughout the fluid core) driving the geodynamo is likely to have remained nearly constant³⁰, so there should not be any significant change in the average properties of the secular variation (in particular its timescales^{31,32}).

Full Methods and any associated references are available in the online version of the paper.

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Author Contributions J.-P.V. initiated the study, performed reversal data treatment and wrote the manuscript. A.F. contributed to all stages of the study by developing the link with theoretical modelling, performing the calculations derived from the CALS10k1b model, writing and editing. V.C. edited the manuscript and influenced its content via discussions. E.H.-B. acquired a large part of the data and critically read the paper.

Author Information Reprints and permissions information is available at www.nature.com/reprints. The authors declare no competing financial interests. Readers are welcome to comment on the online version of the paper. Correspondence and requests for materials should be addressed to J.-P.V. (valet@ipgp.fr).

A Silurian armoured aplacophoran and implications for molluscan phylogeny

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The Mollusca is one of the most diverse, important and well-studied invertebrate phyla; however, relationships among major molluscan taxa have long been a subject of controversy^{1–9}. In particular, the position of the shell-less vermiform Aplacophora and its relationship to the better-known Polyplacophora (chitons) have been problematic: Aplacophora has been treated as a paraphyletic or monophyletic group at the base of the Mollusca^{6,8}, proximate to other derived clades such as Cephalopoda^{3,3,10}, or as sister group to the Polyplacophora, forming the clade Aculifera^{1,5,7,11,12}. Resolution of this debate is required to allow the evolutionary origins of Mollusca to be reconstructed with confidence. Recent fossil finds^{13–16} support the Aculifera hypothesis, demonstrating that the Palaeozoic-era palaeoloricate 'chitons' included taxa combining certain polyplacophoran and aplacophoran characteristics⁵. However, fossils combining an unambiguously aplacophoran-like body with chiton-like valves have remained elusive. Here we describe such a fossil, *Kulindroplax perissokomos* gen. et sp. nov., from the Herefordshire Lagerstätte^{17,18} (about 425 million years BP), a Silurian deposit preserving a marine biota¹⁸ in unusual three-dimensional detail. The specimen is reconstructed three-dimensionally through physical–optical tomography¹⁹. Phylogenetic analysis indicates that this and many other palaeoloricate chitons are crown-group aplacophorans.

Phylum Mollusca

Kulindroplax perissokomos Sutton, Briggs, Siveter, Siveter and Sigwart gen. et sp. nov.

Etymology. *kulindros* (Greek; 'roller' or 'cylinder') plus *plax* (Greek; 'plate'), alluding to the cylindrical valve-bearing morphology; and *perissokomos* (Greek; 'exceedingly hairy'), alluding to the pervasive spicule covering. Gender masculine.

Holotype. Oxford University Museum of Natural History OUMNH C.29641, the only known specimen (Fig. 1a–m).

Locality and horizon. Wenlock Series, Silurian; Herefordshire, England.

Diagnosis for genus and species. Series of seven similar unarticulated valves, lacking ventral articulation. The head valve is shorter and much lower in height; the tail valve is taller. Valves with weak anterior jugal embayment, weakly obtuse apical angle and jugal angle near 90°. Posterolateral margins are weakly concave and serrated. All valves are mixoperipheral, with ventral apical area extending to over 25% of valve length. Valves lack ornament. The foot is absent and the girdle complete ventrally while open anteriorly and posteriorly; it bears concavo-convex blade-like spicules. A gill array of at least four pairs of elements is contained within the long posterior cavity.

Description. The trunk is elongate, moderately curved ventrally (Fig. 1e) and bears seven morphologically similar valves (Fig. 1a, b, c) that overlap without articulating; these would have been in contact

when the trunk was straight. In each valve, width > length > height (see Supplementary Note 1 for biometrics). Valves II–VI differ only slightly, but valve I is relatively short and low and valve VII (posterior terminal valve) is substantially taller (Fig. 1a, b, g, h). In transverse section the valves are keeled posteriorly and rounded anteriorly, with planar to weakly convex lateral areas and a jugal angle of approximately 90° (Fig. 1g), except in valve I (approximately 120°). In lateral profile (Fig. 1e), the dorsal surface is weakly convex, the anterolateral margin is evenly curved and the posterolateral margin is straight to weakly concave. In dorsoventral views (Fig. 1a, b), the anterior margin shows a weak median jugal embayment. Lateral margins are straight to weakly convex, and anterolateral corners are well rounded. Posterolateral corners are sharp in posterior valves and more rounded in anterior valves, with angles increasing anteriorly from approximately 80° (valve VII) to approximately 120° (valve I). Posterolateral margins are weakly concave, converging to a rounded beak with a weakly obtuse apical angle. Weakly defined linear depressions on the lateral areas of valves converge posteriorly at the apex (for example, Fig. 1a, valve V). Posterolateral margins are weakly serrated (Fig. 1i). No growth lines or dorsal ornament have been observed. There is a mixoperipheral fold around the posterior margin of all valves on the ventral internal surface (apical area, Fig. 1b, k). Valves are up to 0.4 mm thick away from apical areas.

The girdle forms a cuticular cylinder 10.5 mm wide and 38 mm long (excluding valves and spicules), with open subplanar terminations (Fig. 1e, h); the anterior termination is flared ventrally. A foot is absent; a weak ventral ridge consisting of imperispermally preserved thickening of ventromedial cuticle extends to both terminations (Fig. 1c, h, l). The cuticle is attached to the ventral part of the valves near their lateral margins (Fig. 1l) from anterior of apical area to near the posterolateral corners, except in the anteriormost valve in which attachment (preserved on right only, Fig. 1h) does not extend anterior of mid-length. Where attached, the cuticle displays reflexion (laterally concave); between attachments it is subcircular in transverse section (Fig. 1c, l; note that Fig. 1c is an oblique section). Densely packed spicules project subnormally from the entire girdle surface except where it attaches to valves, and along the ventral cuticular ridge (Fig. 1c–e, h, j, m). Spicules are blade-like with a sub-semicircular cross-section (Fig. 1d); they are convex anteriorly and weakly recurved to point posteriorly (Fig. 1j, m). Spicules are 1–2 mm long, with larger spicules occurring laterally. Spicules taper to pointed tips (Fig. 1m); some evenly, others maintaining maximum breadth for much of their length.

The body mass is shrunken owing to decay and appears undifferentiated; valves III–VII preserve the attachment (Fig. 1b). Body mass approaches (but is not attached to) the ventral cuticle only near valve V; elsewhere it slopes dorsally. The surface of mass is uneven, asymmetrical and marked by subcircular 'pockmarks' (for example, Fig. 1k). An anterior dorsomedian linear depression may represent the position of the girdle (Fig. 1b). No radula is preserved.

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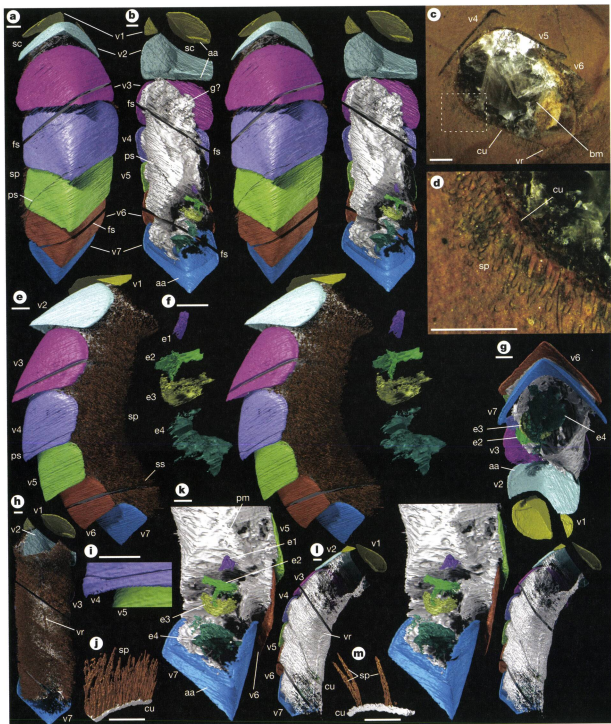


Figure 1 | Oxford University Museum of Natural History (OUMNH) C.29641: holotype of *Kulindroplax perissokomos*. **a, b** and **e–m** are 'virtual' reconstructions. **a**, Dorsal stereo pair. **b**, Ventral stereo pair (cuticle and spicules removed). **c**, Photograph of the specimen before serial grinding (that is, section along primary split). Dashed box indicates the position of **d, d'**. **d**, Detail of **c** showing spicules. **e**, Lateral stereo pair. **f**, Dorsal stereo pair of gill array (cuticle, spicules, valves and body removed). **g**, Posterior view (cuticle and spicules removed). **h**, Ventral view. **i**, Detail of **e** (rotated) showing serrated margin of valve IV. **j**, Representative piece of spicule-bearing cuticle, from point labelled 'ss' in **e**. Posterolateral view (ventral up). **k**, Ventrolateral view of

posterior of specimen (cuticle and spicules removed). **l**, Oblique (subventral) view (spicules removed). **m**, Sub-posterior view (ventral upright) of cuticle piece from **j** with all but three spicules removed. Scale bars, 2 mm (virtual reconstructions are perspective views and scale decreases away from viewer; where depth of object is substantial, the scale is calculated for the valve closest to the viewer). aa, apical area; bm, body mass; cu, cuticle; e1–e4, elements 1–4 of gill array; fs, fine-cut (~0.3 mm material removed); g, gut trace; pm, 'pockmark'; ps, primary split (crack between part and counterpart); sc, sac-cut (~2 mm material removed); sp, spicules; ss, spicule sample; v1–v7, valves I (head)–VII (tail); vr, ventral ridge.

A posterior cavity contains poorly preserved filament-bearing structures that are interpreted as elements of a gill array comprising four element pairs (Fig. 1b, f, g, k). These are described in detail in Supplementary Note 3.

Discussion. The morphology of *Kulindroplax* provides new and clear documentation of the flexibility and disparity of the palaeoarticulate bauplan^{13–16}, as well as supporting a natural clade Aculifera. Two other Palaeozoic fossils show both polyplacophoran- and aplacophoran-like

characteristics: *Acaenoplax*^{3,34}, also from the Herefordshire Lagerstätte, and the less well-preserved Ordovician *Phthipodochiton thraivensis*^{5,16}. The arrangement and morphology of the valves of *Acaenoplax* differ from those in living polyplacophorans and their fossil representatives, and some features of the body have no direct equivalent in living aplacophorans^{3,14,20,21}. The valves of *Phthipodochiton* in contrast, are typical of palaeoloricate 'polyplacophorans'; this taxon also has a ventrally complete (or near-complete) girdle, although this feature is not sufficiently well preserved for satisfactory characterization. *Kulindroplax* represents the first unambiguous combination of palaeoloricate valves and aplacophoran body, and hence is the clearest known fossil link between the Polyplacophora and Aplacophora. The valves of *Kulindroplax* are closely comparable to those of the palaeoloricate *Chelodes*²², and of *Phthipodochiton*. However, the cuticle, sub-circular cross-section, complete coat of spicules and wide posterior cavity housing respiratory organs are aplacophoran features. *Phthipodochiton* has been compared with predatory solenogasters (neomeniomorphs)^{2,3}. Several characters of *Kulindroplax*, in contrast, invite comparison with the caudofoveate (chaetoderm) aplacophorans. These include the absence of a pedal groove or pit, the posteriorly (as opposed to posteroventrally) opening respiratory cavity, and the gill array with elements that are more closely comparable to the tentidia of caudofoveates than the gill folds of the solenogasters, although there seem to be four pairs rather than one.

All valve-bearing aculiferans possess eight dorsal valves where this number can be determined, except for *Acaenoplax*^{3,14} and Multiplacophora¹⁵. *Kulindroplax* is unique in its chiton-like sclerite (that is, a single row of mixoperipherally grown overlapping dorsal valves) with only seven elements (see Supplementary Note 4, character 14), although there is a parallel in the seven putative shell-folds described in one postlarval solenogaster²⁴.

The phylogenetic position of *Kulindroplax* was investigated using a modified version of the data matrix described in ref. 5. The a priori weighting scheme of these authors is replaced here with a posteriori weighting scheme^{25,26}, although results under a priori weighting are similar. Supplementary Note 4 provides full details of the new matrix, the methods used and the results of different variants of our analysis. Our tree topology (Fig. 2) is similar to that depicted in ref. 5, recovering clades including the halwaxiids²⁷ (Wiwaxia, Halkieria and *Orthozanclus*), Neoloricate and Aculifera (Aplacophora and Polyplacophora). Aculifera falls out as sister group to Conchifera, the latter represented by the monoplacophoran *Neopilina*, the early crown-group bivalves *Pojetaia* and *Fordilla*, and an Ordovician bivalve (*Babinka*) that had eightfold iteration of adductor muscles²⁸. The recovery of Aculifera and Conchifera in all variants of our analysis demonstrates the strong morphological support that fossil data now offer for the Aculifera

hypothesis, paralleling recent molecular evidence favouring this topology^{1,2,11,12}. The Serialia hypothesis for a clade comprising monoplacophorans and polyplacophorans^{2,3} is rejected by present fossil data.

Aplacophora (represented by *Chaetoderma* and *Epimeria*) is also recovered, but instead of occupying a derived position relative to related valve-bearing fossils², the extant aplacophoran genera occur relatively stemwards. *Epimeria* (a solenogaster) resolves as more primitive than *Chaetoderma* (a caudofoveate). This result is compatible with neontological inferences, developed under the Aculifera hypothesis, that caudofoveates are relatively derived².

Evidence for the mode of life of *Acaenoplax*¹ and *Phthipodochiton*²³ suggests a creeping epifaunal habit, but the concavo-convex spicules of *Kulindroplax* seem to be well adapted as sediment ratchets that could have facilitated forward movement through a substrate. Although these spicules occur all over the cuticle, the dorsal valves are not easy to reconcile with a fully infaunal (caudofoveate-like) autecology; *Kulindroplax* may instead have been semi-infaunal, probably facultatively, retaining a requirement for dorsal armour.

Kulindroplax, *Acaenoplax*, *Phthipodochiton* and other palaeoloricates fall within the aplacophoran crown-group in the results from all but one of our analyses (the exception neither recovers nor excludes this position; see Supplementary Note 4). Thus, the presence of a foot cannot be inferred for any animal with chiton-like palaeoloricate valves. These topologies also indicate that valve loss occurred independently in Solenogasteres and Caudofoveata: it is not a synapomorphy of Aplacophora. Aplacophorans were primitively shelled molluscs; the few living forms represent the survivors of a diverse valve-bearing Palaeozoic clade.

METHODS SUMMARY

Morphology was reconstructed digitally following serial grinding at 30-µm intervals; compressed versions of the raw data are available for download as Supplementary Data 2. Some material has been lost to saw-cuts in processing; see Supplementary Note 2. The full reconstructed model is available for download and viewing in VAXML format²⁹ as Supplementary Data 1. See Supplementary Note 4 for details of the phylogenetic analyses.

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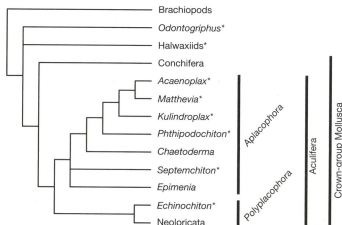


Figure 2 | Summary of parsimony analysis results. Asterisk denotes extinct taxa. See Supplementary Note 4 for details and full version of tree.

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A transcriptomic hourglass in plant embryogenesis

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Animal and plant development starts with a constituting phase called embryogenesis, which evolved independently in both lineages¹. Comparative anatomy of vertebrate development—based on the Meckel-Serrès law² and von Baer's laws of embryology³ from the early nineteenth century—shows that embryos from various taxa appear different in early stages, converge to a similar form during mid-embryogenesis, and again diverge in later stages. This morphogenetic series is known as the embryonic 'hourglass'^{4,5}, and its bottleneck of high conservation in mid-embryogenesis is referred to as the phylotypic stage⁶. Recent analyses in zebrafish and *Drosophila* embryos provided convincing molecular support for the hourglass model, because during the phylotypic stage the transcriptome was dominated by ancient genes⁷ and global gene expression profiles were reported to be most conserved⁸. Although extensively explored in animals, an embryonic hourglass has not been reported in plants, which represent the second major kingdom in the tree of life that evolved embryogenesis. Here we provide phylostratigraphic evidence for a molecular embryonic hourglass in *Arabidopsis thaliana*, using two complementary approaches. This is particularly significant because the possible absence of an hourglass based on morphological features in plants suggests that morphological and molecular patterns might be uncoupled. Together with the reported developmental hourglass patterns in animals, these findings indicate convergent evolution of the molecular hourglass and a conserved logic of embryogenesis across kingdoms.

In flowering plants, embryogenesis can be separated into three major phases. The early phase is characterized by asymmetric cell divisions to establish apical–basal polarity. In the intermediate phase, major organs and primordia are initiated, which expand in the late phase to the mature embryo^{9,10}. One notable difference between embryogenesis in animals and plants concerns the establishment of morphological variation between taxa. For example, vertebrates develop morphological variation in late embryogenesis, whereas differences between flowering plant taxa are only established during post-embryonic development. Inspired by the historical relevance of the embryonic hourglass model in animals, by recent transcriptional support from studies in zebrafish⁷ and *Drosophila*⁸, and by the absence of any reported anatomical evidence for such a pattern during plant embryogenesis, we assess the possible existence of a transcriptional hourglass during embryogenesis of the plant reference species *A. thaliana*.

Recently, genome-wide expression profiles of a complete developmental series from the zygote to the mature embryo in *A. thaliana* were obtained¹¹. To investigate the presence of an embryonic hourglass in plants, we combine this transcriptome information with two different measures of evolutionary distance: evolutionary age and sequence divergence. We compute two different transcriptome indices for each gene, the transcriptome age index (TAI)⁷ based on evolutionary age, and the transcriptome divergence index (TDI) based on sequence divergence. We investigate the profiles of these two transcriptome indices across the seven sampled embryo stages, and ask if and to what degree they show an hourglass pattern similar to that found for zebrafish⁷ or *Drosophila*⁸.

For calculating the TAI, we assign an evolutionary age to each gene in the *A. thaliana* genome by sorting each gene into its phylostratum, defined as the most distant phylogenetic node containing at least one species with a detectable homologue (Methods, Supplementary Fig. 1, Supplementary Tables 1 and 2). The resulting phylostratigraphic map¹² contains 13 phylostrata, PS1–PS13 (Fig. 1a). PS1 includes the evolutionarily oldest genes with homologous sequences in prokaryotes, and PS13 includes the evolutionarily youngest genes with no homologue in any other species.

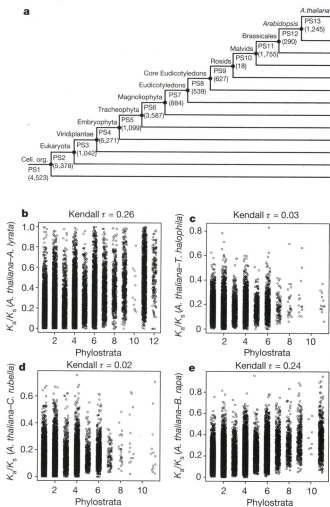


Figure 1 | Evolutionary age and sequence divergence of *A. thaliana* genes. **a**, Phylostratigraphic map of *A. thaliana*. Numbers in parenthesis denote the number of genes per phylostratum (PS1–PS13). Cell. org., cellular organisms described by PS1. **b–e**, Scatter plots of phylostratum versus K_d/K_a ratios over all genes. K_d/K_a ratios are derived from orthologous genes between *A. thaliana* and **b**, *A. lyrata*, **c**, *T. halophila*, **d**, *C. rubella* and **e**, *B. rapa*. Kendall τ values denote the Kendall rank correlation coefficients measuring the association between both parameters. See Methods for details.

For calculating the TDI, we determine the sequence divergence between *A. thaliana* and its sister species *Arabidopsis lyrata* or any one of the closely related Brassicaceae, *Brassica rapa*, *Capsella rubella* and *Thellungiella halophila*, by computing the K_a/K_s ratio (Supplementary Table 3). Here K_a is the number of non-synonymous substitutions per non-synonymous site and K_s is the number of synonymous substitutions per synonymous site for each orthologous gene pair. The K_a/K_s ratio is an indicator of selective pressure within protein coding regions and, thus, reflects natural selection, one of the major forces driving molecular evolution. Interestingly, evolutionary age and sequence divergence as quantified above show only weak correlations (Kendall's rank correlation coefficient ranging from 0.02 to 0.26; Fig. 1b–e), indicating that both measures of evolutionary distance can be regarded as complementary (Supplementary Note).

In combination with transcript information, the TAI quantifies the mean evolutionary age of a transcriptome, where the evolutionary age (phylostratum) of each gene is weighted by its expression level⁷. Analogously, we define the TDI as the mean sequence divergence of a transcriptome, where the sequence divergence (K_a/K_s) of each gene is weighted by its expression level (Methods).

Figure 2 and Supplementary Fig. 2 show the TAI and TDI profiles across the seven sampled embryo stages of *A. thaliana*. We find that transcriptomes of early plant embryonic stages such as zygote and quadrant are evolutionarily young (high TAI), transcriptomes of the mid-embryonic phase ranging from the globular to the torpedo stage are older (low TAI), and transcriptomes of later stages of embryogenesis are younger again (Fig. 2a). Qualitatively, this TAI profile strikingly resembles the molecular hourglass pattern discovered for zebrafish and *Drosophila*⁷. Likewise, we find that transcriptomes of early stages are divergent (high TDI), transcriptomes of the mid-embryonic phase are more conserved (low TDI), and transcriptomes of later stages of embryogenesis are more divergent again (Fig. 2b). Remarkably, the TDI profile qualitatively resembles the molecular hourglass pattern of the gene expression divergence profile discovered for *Drosophila*⁸ and recently also *Caenorhabditis*¹³.

Comparing both profiles, we make two observations. First, each of the profiles shows an hourglass pattern, where the TAI reflects long-term evolutionary changes covering 4 billion years since the origin of life, and the TDI reflects short-term evolutionary changes covering

roughly 5–16 million years since the divergence of *A. thaliana* and the other four Brassicaceae^{14–17} (Supplementary Note). Second, both profiles point to the torpedo stage as the predicted phylostratic stage, representing simultaneously the stage with the oldest as well as the most conserved/least divergent transcriptome. An independent, but comparable transcriptome dataset^{18,19} from *A. thaliana* (Supplementary Fig. 3), which likewise covers embryogenesis from early phases to the mature embryo, confirms the hourglass pattern for both indices (Supplementary Fig. 4). Together, these observations suggest the possibility of convergent evolution of a molecular embryonic hourglass in animals and *A. thaliana*, and make it tempting to conjecture its universal presence across animal and plant kingdoms.

Given that developmental processes during plant and animal embryogenesis can be very different from the zygote stage on²⁰, and that the embryonic hourglass must have evolved independently in plants and animals, we wish to understand how the torpedo stage as the *bona fide* phylostratic stage in *A. thaliana* relates to animal phylostratic stages.

Across different animal taxa, the phylostratic stage was defined as the stage at which all major body parts are represented at their final positions as undifferentiated cell condensations²¹. In relation to this ontogenic progression in animals, the mid-embryonic transition from the globular to the heart stage may conceptually serve as the corresponding stage in flowering plants. Here, polar axes are established and shoot and root apical meristems are initiated²². Hence, the ensuing torpedo stage at the transition from mid- to late-embryogenesis marks an ontogenic progression that seems more advanced than the phylostratic stage known from animals. Considering that morphological diversity and many important organs in flowering plants develop post-embryonically, it is possible that the phylostratic stage may be shifted towards the transition from mid- to late-embryogenesis compared to animals.

Furthermore, the torpedo stage roughly marks the transition from morphogenesis to the maturation phase. Morphogenesis involves the establishment of the embryo's body plan, whereas maturation involves cell expansion and accumulation of storage macromolecules to prepare for desiccation, germination and early seedling growth²³. Whereas all land plants/embyophytes (all species from PS4 on) including lower land plants pass through a morphogenesis phase, only the embryogenesis of higher land plants concludes with a maturation phase. Completely different signalling cascades are involved in both phases. One set is switched off and the other one is initiated. Because torpedo stage embryos are in the transition between these different developmental programs, it is conceivable that transcriptional programs are likewise reduced to conserved and evolutionary ancient processes that are reflected by the neck of the hourglass (Fig. 2).

Encouraged by these findings, we seek to understand how the molecular hourglass pattern of the TAI profile is determined. Two simple scenarios that would result in a decrease of TAI values include up-regulation of old genes, or down-regulation of young genes during mid-embryogenesis. To distinguish between both scenarios, we compute the relative expression levels of genes from phylostrata containing pre-embryogenesis species (PS1–PS3) versus post-embryogenesis phylostrata (land plants/embyophytes from PS4–PS13, representing plant species that pass through embryogenesis). Whereas expression levels of old genes vary only marginally across embryo stages, young genes are down-regulated towards the torpedo stage, and the ratio of the relative expression levels of old and young genes is maximized in the torpedo stage (Fig. 3a, Supplementary Fig. 5). Next, we divide the genes along the median of the K_a/K_s ratios over all genes and perform an analogous analysis for conserved (below median) versus divergent (above median) genes. Interestingly, we find a similar pattern, with divergent genes being more down-regulated towards the torpedo stage than conserved genes (Fig. 3b, Supplementary Figs 6–9). These results are confirmed by the independent dataset^{18,19} (Supplementary Figs 10–14).

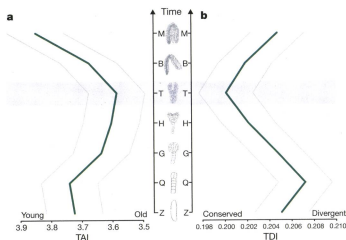


Figure 2 | Transcriptome indices across *A. thaliana* embryogenesis. **a**, The transcriptome age index (TAI) profile. **b**, The transcriptome divergence index (TDI) profile. Embryo stages: Z, zygote; Q, quadrant; G, globular; H, heart; T, torpedo; B, bent cotyledon; M, mature. Representative drawings (not on the same scale) are given for each sampled embryo stage. The blue shaded area marks the predicted phylostratic stage. The grey lines represent the standard error estimated by bootstrap analysis. The overall patterns of the TAI and TDI profiles are highly significant, as measured by permutation tests ($P_{TAI} = 2.55 \times 10^{-17}$; $P_{TDI} = 2.15 \times 10^{-23}$). See Methods for details.

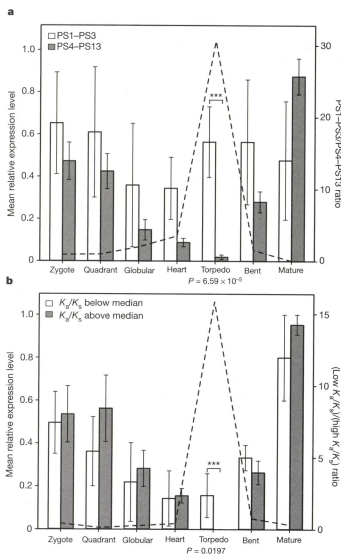


Figure 3 | Relative expression levels over embryo stages. **a**, Left axis, mean relative expression levels of genes in PS1–PS3 (open bars) and PS4–PS13 (shaded bars); relative expression levels range from 0 to 1. Right axis, ratio of mean relative expression levels between PS1–PS3 and PS4–PS13, data points connected by dashed line. **b**, Analogously to **a**, genes were divided along the median of the K_e/K_a ratios over all genes. Open and shaded bars show K_e/K_a values respectively below and above the median; data points connected by dashed line show the ratio of low to high K_e/K_a values. Error bars, standard error. Asterisks denote significant differences between PS1–PS3 and PS4–PS13 values (**a**) and conserved (below median) versus divergent (above median) genes at the torpedo stage (**b**); * $P < 0.05$; *** $P < 0.0005$.

Hence, the embryonic hourglass in *A. thaliana* seems to be coordinated by the quantitative down-regulation of young/divergent genes or, qualitatively, by the expression of fewer young/divergent genes towards the torpedo stage. This is in notable agreement with observations from the animal kingdom^{7,8,24,25}. As only a fraction of these down-regulated young genes in *A. thaliana* display an hourglass shaped expression profile across the sampled embryo stages themselves, the hourglass pattern is most probably caused by different sets of young genes. One set is involved in morphogenesis (up-regulated before the torpedo stage and down-regulated thereafter) and one set is involved in maturation (down-regulated before the torpedo stage and up-regulated thereafter; Supplementary Figs 15 and 16). In addition, we find that significantly enriched gene ontology terms among young plant genes down-regulated in the torpedo stage compared to early- or late embryogenesis describe signalling processes, such as responses to endogenous stimuli and hormones (Supplementary

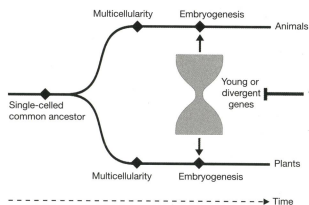


Figure 4 | Convergent evolution of a molecular hourglass in animal and plant embryogenesis. Originating from a single-celled common ancestor, animal and plant lineages evolved both multicellularity and embryogenesis independently. For the coordinated progression of the organisms through embryogenesis, the transcriptsomes have to follow an hourglass pattern with maximally ancient and conserved transcriptsomes during the phylogenetic stage.

Tables 5 and 6). This indicates that signalling processes controlling transcription of relatively recently evolved genes are down-regulated during the predicted phylogenetic stage of *A. thaliana* embryogenesis.

Using a phylotranscriptomic approach based on two complementary measures of evolutionary distance and two independent datasets, we have observed a molecular embryonic hourglass in plants, which seems to be predominantly caused by down-regulation of young and divergent genes towards the torpedo stage (Fig. 4). This observation is surprising for two reasons. First, morphological diversity during embryogenesis of flowering plants is negligible, so the increase of both transcriptome indices in late embryogenesis precedes the morphological differences established only during post-embryonic development. Second, convergent evolution of a molecular hourglass pattern in animals and plants suggests operation of a fundamental developmental profile controlling the expression of evolutionarily young or rapidly evolving genes across kingdoms. We speculate that such a mechanism may be required for enabling spatio-temporal organization and differentiation of complex multicellular life.

METHODS SUMMARY

Following ref. 7, 1,459 species with completely sequenced genomes (Supplementary Table 1) were sorted into 13 phylostrata (Supplementary Fig. 1), and amino acid sequences of *A. thaliana* were compared with the amino acid sequences of these species using Blast. If no Blast hit was identified, the corresponding gene of *A. thaliana* was assigned to PS13; otherwise, it was assigned to the phylogenetically most distant phylostratum containing at least one Blast hit. This procedure resulted in the phylostratigraphic map shown in Fig. 1a.

Orthologous gene pairs of *A. thaliana* and *A. lyrata*, *T. halophila*, *C. rubella*, or *B. rapa* were determined with the method of best hits using Blastp. Amino acid sequence alignments of each pair generated with MAFFT²⁶ (L-INS-i option) were used for codon alignments generated with PAL2NAL²⁷ to compute sequence divergence levels (K_e/K_a) with GEMSTATOR²⁸. Gene pairs with $K_e < 0.5$, $K_a < 5$ and K_e/K_a ratios < 2 were retained.

Introduced in ref. 7, the TAI of developmental stage s is the weighted mean of the phylostratum ps_i of gene i weighted by the expression level e_{is} of gene i at developmental stage s

$$TAI_s = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n ps_i e_{is}}{\sum_{i=1}^n e_{is}} \quad (1)$$

where n is the total number of genes analysed. Low PS values correspond to evolutionarily old genes, so low TAI values correspond to evolutionarily old transcriptsomes. Likewise, high PS values correspond to evolutionarily young genes, so high TAI values correspond to evolutionarily young transcriptsomes.

Analogously, we introduce the TDI of developmental stage s by replacing ps_i in equation (1) by the K_e/K_a ratio of gene i .

$$TDL_i = \frac{\sum_{j=1}^n \left(\frac{K_{ij}}{K_{ij}} \right) e_{is}}{\sum_{j=1}^n e_{is}} \quad (2)$$

Here, low/high K_{ij}/K_{ij} ratios correspond to conserved/divergent genes, so low/high TDL values correspond to conserved/divergent transcriptomes.

Full Methods and any associated references are available in the online version of the paper.

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Author Contributions M.Q. conceived the study, M.Q. and I.G. supervised the project, H.-G.D., A.G., K.K.U. and M.B. analysed the data, M.Q., H.-G.D., A.G., K.K.U., M.B. and I.G. interpreted the results, M.Q. and I.G. wrote the manuscript.

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Pregnancy imprints regulatory memory that sustains anergy to fetal antigen

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Pregnancy is an intricately orchestrated process where immune effector cells with fetal specificity are selectively silenced. This requires the sustained expansion of immune-suppressive maternal FOXP3⁺ regulatory T cells (T_{reg} cells), because even transient partial ablation triggers fetal-specific effector T-cell activation and pregnancy loss^{1,2}. In turn, many idiopathic pregnancy complications proposed to originate from disrupted fetal tolerance are associated with blunted maternal T_{reg} expansion^{3–5}. Importantly, however, the antigen specificity and cellular origin of maternal T_{reg} cells that accumulate during gestation remain incompletely defined. Here we show that pregnancy selectively stimulates the accumulation of maternal FOXP3⁺ CD4 cells with fetal specificity using tetramer-based enrichment that allows the identification of rare endogenous T cells⁶. Interestingly, after delivery, fetal-specific T_{reg} cells persist at elevated levels, maintain tolerance to pre-existing fetal antigen, and rapidly re-accumulate during subsequent pregnancy. The accelerated expansion of T_{reg} cells during secondary pregnancy was driven almost exclusively by proliferation of fetal-specific FOXP3⁺ cells retained from prior pregnancy, whereas induced FOXP3 expression and proliferation of pre-existing FOXP3⁺ cells each contribute to T_{reg} expansion during primary pregnancy. Furthermore, fetal resorption in secondary compared with primary pregnancy becomes more resilient to partial maternal FOXP3⁺ cell ablation. Thus, pregnancy imprints FOXP3⁺ CD4 cells that sustain protective regulatory memory to fetal antigen. We anticipate that these findings will spark further investigation on maternal regulatory T cell specificity that unlocks new strategies for improving pregnancy outcomes and novel approaches for therapeutically exploiting T_{reg} cell memory.

The accumulation of maternal T_{reg} cells during pregnancy parallels the need for expanded tolerance to encompass 'non-self' fetal antigens^{3–5,7,8}. However, one consequence of sustained FOXP3⁺ cell expansion is susceptibility to prenatal infection⁹. Given the increasingly recognized importance of T_{reg} specificity in regulating the fluid balance between immune activation that maintains host defence and immune suppression that prevents autoimmunity^{10–14}, we reasoned that establishing the specificity of maternal T_{reg} cells that expand during pregnancy could unravel ways to dissociate their beneficial and detrimental impacts. Furthermore, extending this analysis post-partum may allow the regulatory memory recently described for T_{reg} cells responsive to an induced self antigen to be investigated in a more physiological context¹⁵. To address these questions, we developed a mating strategy where the I-A^b 2W1S_{55–68} peptide (a variant of peptide residues 55–68 for the alpha chain of the mouse major histocompatibility complex (MHC) class II, I-E^b) becomes a surrogate fetal antigen using male mice (H-2^b; Balb/c or H-2^b C57BL/6 [B6]) engineered to co-express this peptide with β -actin to impregnate non-2W1S-expressing B6 females¹⁶. In turn, the high precursor frequency of CD4 cells with 2W1S_{55–68} specificity allows endogenous maternal T_{reg} cells to this surrogate fetal antigen to be identified using MHC class II tetramer enrichment¹⁶.

Using this approach, maternal CD4 cells with fetal-2W1S specificity were found to sharply upregulate CD44 expression, progressively accumulate throughout pregnancy, and persist at approximately ten-fold increased levels through day 100 post-partum compared with non-pregnant controls (Fig. 1a). Maternal 2W1S⁺ cell expansion was specific to mating with 2W1S-expressing mice because they did not accumulate in females impregnated by non-transgenic Balb/c males (Supplementary Fig. 1). Because seminal fluid also contains cells of paternal origin¹⁷, 2W1S⁺ cells in female mice rendered infertile with low-dose irradiation were also enumerated. We found that although mating without pregnancy stimulated modest 2W1S⁺ cell expansion and CD44 upregulation, the magnitude was markedly reduced compared with pregnant mice (Supplementary Fig. 1). Thus, maternal 2W1S⁺ CD4 cell expansion during pregnancy reflects an antigen-specific response to cells of fetal origin.

Given the essential requirement for T_{reg} cells in maintaining fetal tolerance^{2,18,19}, we investigated FOXP3 expression among maternal cells with fetal-2W1S specificity. Beginning mid-gestation, 2W1S⁺ compared with 2W1S[−] CD4 cells became enriched for FOXP3 expression in allogeneic (Fig. 1a, b), as well as syngeneic pregnancy (Supplementary Fig. 2). As pregnancy progressed, FOXP3 expression among 2W1S⁺ cells became progressively more pronounced, peaking at around 50% late gestation through to the first 48 h post-partum (embryonic day 18.5 (E18.5) to post-partum day 2 (PP2)) (Fig. 1a, b and Supplementary Fig. 3). Furthermore, 2W1S⁺FOXP3⁺ cells, and to a lesser extent 2W1S⁺FOXP3[−] cells, upregulated the proliferation marker Ki67 that paralleled expanding fetal tissue (Fig. 1c). Reciprocally after expulsion of the fetus (PP14 to PP100), Ki67 expression among 2W1S⁺FOXP3⁺ and 2W1S⁺FOXP3[−] cells became reduced (Fig. 1c). However, despite diminished Ki67 levels, FOXP3 expression among 2W1S⁺ cells was sustained at ~20% through day 100 post-partum (Fig. 1a, b). Accordingly, maternal T_{reg} cells with fetal specificity selectively accumulate during pregnancy and persist following parturition.

Interestingly, maternal T_{reg} cells with fetal-2W1S specificity also progressively downregulated Helios (also known as IKZF2) expression that dropped to its lowest level of ~40% Helios^{hi} by late gestation, whereas the few 2W1S⁺FOXP3⁺ cells in non-pregnant mice were uniformly Helios^{hi} (Fig. 1d). Comparatively, Helios expression among bulk maternal T_{reg} cells did not shift significantly. Although this discordance in Helios expression may suggest conversion of fetal-specific FOXP3⁺ cells into FOXP3[−] cells²⁰, the recent finding that some peripherally induced T_{reg} cells also express Helios led us to more definitively investigate the origin of maternal T_{reg} cells with fetal specificity²¹. In particular, we asked whether mating with 2W1S-expressing males can convert 2W1S⁺FOXP3[−] CD4 cells from Foxp3^{DTR/DTR} donors ablated of T_{reg} cells with diphtheria toxin²² (Foxp3^{DTR/DTR} T_{reg} cells carry the human diphtheria toxin receptor (DTR) fused to an internal ribosome entry site into the 3' untranslated region of Foxp3, rendering them susceptible to ablation with low-dose diphtheria toxin) into FOXP3⁺ cells after adoptive transfer into virgin Foxp3^{WT/WT} recipient mice. By mid-gestation, 2W1S⁺FOXP3[−] among T_{reg}-ablated donor Foxp3^{DTR/DTR}

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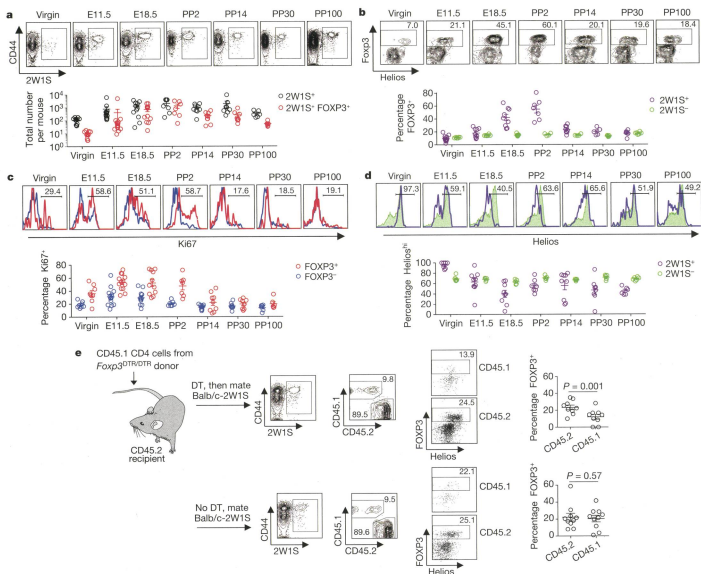


Figure 1 | Accumulation of maternal CD4 and FOXP3⁺ T_{reg} cells with fetal specificity during gestation. **a**, Total 2W1S⁺ or 2W1S⁺FOXP3⁺ CD4 cells in B6 females impregnated by Balb/c-2W1S males. **b**, Percentage FOXP3⁺ among 2W1S⁺ or 2W1S⁻ CD4 cells. **c**, Percentage Ki67⁺ among 2W1S⁺FOXP3⁺ or 2W1S⁺FOXP3⁻ CD4 cells. **d**, Percentage Helios^{hi} among

2W1S⁺FOXP3⁺ or 2W1S⁺FOXP3⁻ CD4 cells. **e**, Percentage FOXP3⁺ among *Foxp3*^{DTR/DTR} donor (CD45.1⁺) or *Foxp3*^{WT/WT} recipient (CD45.2⁺) 2W1S⁺ CD4 cells mid-gestation (E11.5) by Balb/c-2W1S males, with diphtheria toxin (DT) treatment (top) or no diphtheria toxin controls (bottom). Bars, means $\pm$ one standard error.

cells were readily recovered, illustrating induction of maternal T_{reg} cells with fetal specificity (Fig. 1e). This conversion was pregnancy-specific and not due to incomplete donor T_{reg} ablation because FOXP3⁺ cells were undetectable among T_{reg}-ablated donor cells in unmated control mice (Supplementary Fig. 4). Importantly, however, FOXP3⁺ among T_{reg}-ablated donor CD4 cells was also consistently reduced (by ~50%) compared with either 2W1S⁺FOXP3⁺ donor cells in mice without diphtheria toxin treatment or among recipient CD4 cells not susceptible to diphtheria toxin (Fig. 1e). Thus, FOXP3 induction among FOXP3⁻ precursors and proliferation of pre-existing FOXP3⁺ cells each contribute to the accumulation of maternal T_{reg} cells with fetal specificity during primary pregnancy.

To further characterize maternal T_{reg} cells with specificity to pre-existing fetal antigen that persist post-partum, these cells were tracked during subsequent pregnancy. After secondary mating, maternal FOXP3⁺ cells with fetal-2W1S specificity accumulated with accelerated kinetics in an antigen-specific fashion (Fig. 2a and Supplementary Fig. 5). The more rapid expansion of maternal T_{reg} cells in separate groups of mice was recapitulated within the same mouse by measuring

2W1S⁺ T_{reg} accumulation among donor CD4 cells from post-partum mice (secondary expansion) adoptively transferred before mating with 2W1S-expressing males, compared with cells in virgin recipient mice (primary expansion) (Fig. 2b). By substituting CD4 cells from post-partum *Foxp3*^{DTR/DTR} mice for adoptive transfer and using diphtheria toxin to eliminate donor T_{reg} cells before mating, we also addressed whether the accelerated secondary expansion of maternal T_{reg} cells with fetal-2W1S specificity reflects more vigorous induction among FOXP3⁻ cells or proliferation of pre-existing FOXP3⁺ cells. We found that, in sharp contrast to primary pregnancy, the ablation of donor T_{reg} cells from post-partum *Foxp3*^{DTR/DTR} mice almost uniformly eliminated their expansion in subsequent pregnancy (Fig. 2c). Thus, recurrent pregnancy primes the accelerated accumulation of maternal FOXP3⁺ cells that expand from pre-existing T_{reg} cells retained from prior pregnancy.

Expanding this model, the responsiveness of maternal CD4 cells with fetal specificity was also investigated. We found 2W1S⁺ cells recovered from mice mid-gestation or post-partum each compared with non-pregnant controls did not produce appreciable IFN- γ *ex vivo*

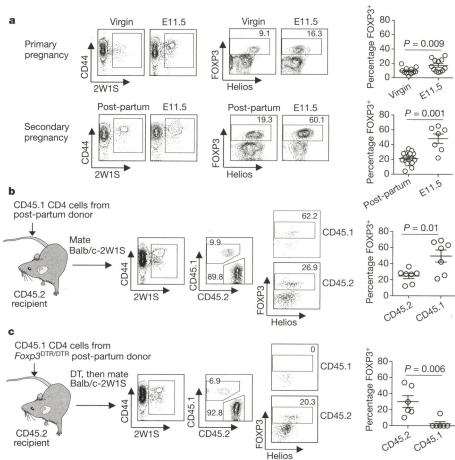


Figure 2 | Accelerated expansion of maternal T_{reg} cells with fetal specificity during secondary pregnancy. **a**, Percentage FOXP3⁺ among virgin (primary pregnancy) or post-partum (secondary pregnancy) females before mating or mid-gestation (E11.5) by Balb/c-2W1S males. **b**, Percentage FOXP3⁺ among

post-partum donor (CD45.1⁺) or naive recipient (CD45.2⁺) 2W1S⁺ CD4 cells mid-gestation by Balb/c-2W1S males. **c**, Percentage FOXP3⁺ among T_{reg} -ablated $Foxp3^{DTR/DTR}$ post-partum donor (CD45.1⁺) or naive recipient (CD45.2⁺) 2W1S⁺ CD4 cells mid-gestation. Bars, means $\pm$ one standard error.

following stimulation, consistent with previously described anergy of maternal cells with fetal specificity (Supplementary Fig. 6)^{22,3}. Therefore, to more fully evaluate the responsiveness of maternal T cells with fetal-2W1S specificity, we measured their *in vivo* response to *Listeria monocytogenes* engineered to express the 2W1S_{55–68} peptide (Lm-2W1S) that potently stimulates T_H1 -differentiation in other contexts^{24,25}. We found that 2W1S⁺ cells expand and upregulate T-bet (also known as TBX21) expression each in an antigen-specific fashion in both naive mice and mice impregnated by 2W1S-expressing males after Lm-2W1S inoculation, similar to other intracellular pathogens (Supplementary Fig. 7)²⁶. Interestingly, however, 2W1S⁺ cells in pregnant mice where 2W1S represents a surrogate fetal antigen produced only background levels of IFN- γ and other effector cytokines, with reciprocal accumulation of FOXP3⁺ cells (Fig. 3a and Supplementary Fig. 8). Comparatively, >15% of 2W1S⁺ cells in Lm-2W1S-inoculated virgin mice were IFN- γ ⁺ (Fig. 3a). This hypo-responsiveness was specific to fetal-2W1S stimulation, because 2W1S⁺ CD4 cells in mice impregnated with non-2W1S-expressing males produced IFN- γ levels comparable to non-pregnant controls (Fig. 3a and Supplementary Fig. 8). Given the sustained enrichment of fetal-specific T_{reg} cells after delivery (Fig. 1a, b), these studies were extended to investigate whether diminished IFN- γ production among maternal CD4 cells with specificity to pre-existing fetal antigen is similarly maintained. Remarkably, IFN- γ production remained anaemic in post-partum mice previously exposed to 2W1S as a fetal antigen, whereas post-partum mice without prior fetal-2W1S exposure produce IFN- γ comparable to non-pregnant controls (Fig. 3b). Accordingly, pregnancy imprints functional anergy for maternal CD4 cells with fetal specificity that is sustained post-partum.

To dissociate whether pregnancy-induced T-cell anergy was cell-intrinsic or imposed by features associated with the post-partum environment, we measured IFN- γ production by CD4 cells from post-partum or virgin mice after adoptive transfer into naive recipient mice. We found IFN- γ production by donor post-partum and each group of naive (donor and recipient) 2W1S⁺ CD4 cells were similar, and notably increased compared with 2W1S⁺ cells in un-manipulated post-partum mice following Lm-2W1S inoculation (Fig. 3b, c). Thus, anergy among maternal CD4 cells with specificity to pre-existing fetal antigen is not cell-intrinsic, but maintained by the post-partum environment.

In complementary studies we addressed the importance of maternal T_{reg} cells in sustaining anergy to cells with specificity to pre-existing fetal antigen by investigating the effect of replacing the entire T_{reg} compartment in post-partum mice previously exposed to fetal-2W1S with naive FOXP3⁺ cells from virgin mice. Consistent with recent studies using adoptively transferred $Foxp3^{WT/WT}$ CD4 cells to refill the cellular compartment in $Foxp3^{DTR/DTR}$ mice sustained on diphtheria toxin treatment²⁷, T_{reg} cells from naive mice efficiently reconstituted T_{reg} -ablated $Foxp3^{DTR/DTR}$ post-partum mice (Fig. 4a). Using this approach, we found that replacing maternal FOXP3⁺ cells in post-partum mice with T_{reg} cells from naive mice restored IFN- γ production for 2W1S⁺ CD4 cells (Fig. 4b). Furthermore, whereas only rare 2W1S⁺ FOXP3⁺ cells that were Helios^{hi} were found among post-partum mice reconstituted with naive T_{reg} cells, a significant proportion of 2W1S⁺ cells expanded in response to Lm-2W1S in intact post-partum mice remained FOXP3⁺ (~20%) and Helios^{lo} (~40%) (Fig. 4b). Thus, the muted expansion of naive FOXP3⁺ CD4 cells with *L. monocytogenes* infection is overcome by pregnancy-induced T_{reg} activation (Fig. 4b and

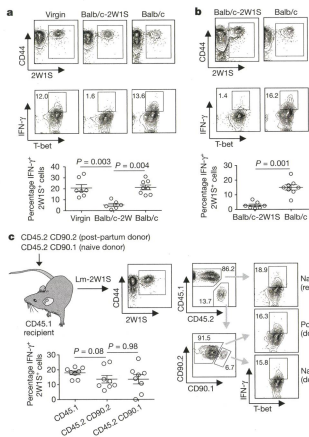


Figure 3 | The post-partum environment maintains anergy for maternal CD4 cells with pre-existing fetal specificity. **a**, IFN- γ -producing 2W1S $^{+}$ CD4 cells 5 days after Lm-2W1S inoculation in virgin or pregnant mice mid-gestation by Balb/c-2W1S or Balb/c males. **b**, IFN- γ -producing 2W1S $^{+}$ CD4 cells 5 days after Lm-2W1S inoculation in post-partum mice previously impregnated by Balb/c-2W1S or Balb/c males. **c**, IFN- γ -producing post-partum donor (CD45.2 $^{+}$ CD90.2 $^{+}$), naive donor (CD45.2 $^{+}$ CD90.1 $^{+}$) or naive recipient (CD45.1 $^{+}$) CD4 cells 5 days after Lm-2W1S inoculation and stimulation with phorbol myristate acetate/ionomycin. Bars, means $\pm$ one standard error.

Supplementary Fig. 8)²⁴. By extension, the restored responsiveness of post-partum 2W1S $^{+}$ cells after adoptive transfer into T_{reg}-sufficient naive mice most likely represents dilution of co-transferred maternal T_{reg} cells with fetal-2W1S specificity (Fig. 3c).

Lastly, to establish how maternal T_{reg} cells with fetal specificity retained post-partum have an effect on subsequent pregnancy outcomes, the frequency of fetal resorption triggered by partial maternal FOXP3 $^{+}$ cell ablation using *Foxp3*^{DTR/WT} mice was compared between secondary and primary pregnancy². We found secondary pregnancy became significantly more resilient to partial T_{reg} ablation because fetal resorption was reduced by ~60% compared with primary pregnancy (Fig. 4c). In turn, fetal resorption in T_{reg}-sufficient *Foxp3*^{WT/WT} mice during secondary pregnancy was also significantly reduced from background levels compared with primary allogeneic pregnancy. Maternal T_{reg} cells were essential for these protective effects because wholesale FOXP3 $^{+}$ cell ablation using *Foxp3*^{DTR/DTR} mice triggered pervasive fetal resorption equally in secondary and primary allogeneic pregnancy (Fig. 4c). Importantly, fetal wastage with maternal T_{reg} ablation in this context was driven by antigen heterogeneity, and not poor maternal health, because the frequency of resorption was sharply reduced with T_{reg} ablation in mice bearing syngeneic pregnancy (Supplementary Fig. 9).

Together, these findings establish a model whereby pregnancy primes the selective accumulation and activation of maternal T_{reg} cells with fetal

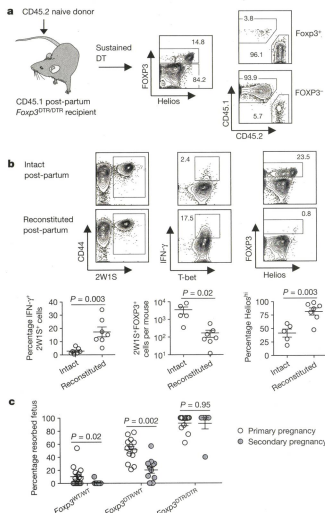


Figure 4 | Maternal post-partum T_{reg} cells mitigate IFN- γ responsiveness and mediate resiliency to fetal resorption in secondary pregnancy.

a, Representative plots illustrating the majority (>96%) of FOXP3 $^{+}$ cells are derived from adoptively transferred CD4 in diphtheria-toxin-treated *Foxp3*^{DTR/DTR} mice. **b**, IFN- γ -producing 2W1S $^{+}$ cells among CD45.1 $^{+}$ CD45.2 $^{+}$ cells, accumulation of 2W1S $^{+}$ FOXP3 $^{+}$ cells, and Helios expression among 2W1S $^{+}$ FOXP3 $^{+}$ T_{reg} cells 5 days after Lm-2W1S inoculation. **c**, Percentage fetal resorption during primary (open) or secondary (shaded) allogeneic pregnancy for *Foxp3*^{WT/WT}, *Foxp3*^{DTR/WT} or *Foxp3*^{DTR/DTR} females 5 days after diphtheria toxin initiation beginning mid-gestation. Bars, means $\pm$ one standard error.

specificity (Supplementary Fig. 10), and extend the role of antigen-experienced T_{reg} cells from primary into subsequent pregnancies^{27,18}. In this regard, whereas maternal T_{reg} cells have been described to expand up to twofold when examined in a non-antigen-specific fashion²⁻⁵, our results demonstrate that FOXP3 $^{+}$ cells with fetal specificity expand >100-fold through parturition (Fig. 1a and Supplementary Fig. 3). After delivery, maternal T_{reg} cells with fetal specificity are sustained at enriched levels, and are functionally distinct as they re-accumulate with accelerated kinetics and out-compete 'naive' T_{reg} cells during secondary pregnancy. Similar to discordant functional properties of naive and activated effector T cells²⁷, these results uncover the exciting possibility of exploiting antigen-specific 'memory' T_{reg} cells to dissociate detrimental and beneficial immune responses. Applied to human pregnancy, these data may explain why rates of pre-eclampsia, and other complications associated with disrupted fetal tolerance, are reduced in secondary compared with primary pregnancy²⁸. However, given the increased risk of pre-eclampsia in recurrent human pregnancy when the inter-pregnancy interval is extended, waning T_{reg} memory similar

to other CD4 subsets would not be unexpected^{25,29}. Therefore, establishing the durability of pregnancy-induced regulatory memory and characterizing whether this response can be sustained with boosting represent next steps with exceptional scientific importance.

METHODS SUMMARY

Mice, 2WIS-expressing and *Foxp3*^{3DTR} mice have each been described^{16,29}. Mated females and the timing of pregnancy was determined by visualization of a copulation plug (E0.5). For infection, Lm-2WIS (10^4 colony-forming units, see Methods)²⁹ was inoculated intravenously. Experiments were performed in accordance with University of Minnesota IACUC approved protocols.

Tetramer enrichment and flow cytometry. 1-A³ 2WIS₅₅₋₆₈ tetramer staining and enrichment have been described²⁹. Lymphoid cells from the spleen and lymph nodes were enriched with 2WIS₅₅₋₆₈ tetramer before surface, intracellular or intranuclear staining. For stimulation, cells were cultured with phorbol myristate acetate plus ionomycin (5 h) before staining.

Cell transfer and ablation. One mouse equivalent of purified CD4 cells was intravenously transferred into recipient mice 1 day before mating or infection. Donor *T_H1* cells from *Foxp3*^{3DTR} mice were ablated in recipient *Foxp3*^{3DTR} mice using purified diphtheria toxin (two doses 8 h apart, 0.5 µg per dose). For ablation of endogenous *T_H1* cells, diphtheria toxin was administered daily (0.5 µg first dose, followed by 0.1 µg per dose daily thereafter) beginning mid-gestation or immediately following donor-cell transfer.

Statistics. Data were analysed using the unpaired (separate groups of mice) or paired (cell subsets within the same mouse) Student's *t* test.

Full Methods and any associated references are available in the online version of the paper.

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Supplementary Information is available in the online version of the paper.

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Rapid induction of inflammatory lipid mediators by the inflammasome *in vivo*

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Detection of microbial products by host inflammasomes is an important mechanism of innate immune surveillance. Inflammasomes activate the caspase-1 (CASP1) protease, which processes the cytokines interleukin (IL)-1 β and IL-18, and initiates a lytic host cell death called pyroptosis¹. To identify novel CASP1 functions *in vivo*, we devised a strategy for cytosolic delivery of bacterial flagellin, a specific ligand for the NAIIP5 (NLR family, apoptosis inhibitory protein 5)/NLR4 (NLR family, CARD-domain-containing 4) inflammasome²⁻⁴. Here we show that systemic inflammasome activation by flagellin leads to a loss of vascular fluid into the intestine and peritoneal cavity, resulting in rapid (less than 30 min) death in mice. This unexpected response depends on the inflammasome components NAIIP5, NLR4 and CASP1, but is independent of the production of IL-1 β or IL-18. Instead, inflammasome activation results, within minutes, in an 'eicosanoid storm'—a pathological release of signalling lipids, including prostaglandins and leukotrienes, that rapidly initiate inflammation and vascular fluid loss. Mice deficient in cyclooxygenase-1, a critical enzyme in prostaglandin biosynthesis, are resistant to these rapid pathological effects of systemic inflammasome activation by either flagellin or anthrax lethal toxin. Inflammasome-dependent biosynthesis of eicosanoids is mediated by the activation of cytosolic phospholipase A₂ in resident peritoneal macrophages, which are specifically primed for the production of eicosanoids by high expression of eicosanoid biosynthetic enzymes. Our results therefore identify eicosanoids as a previously unrecognized cell-type-specific signalling output of the inflammasome with marked physiological consequences *in vivo*.

NAIIP/NLR4 inflammasome activation is critical for innate immune detection and defence against multiple bacterial pathogens in mice²⁻⁷. This resistance to infection, as well as the inflammasome-dependent response to systemic endotoxin, does not require IL-1 β or IL-18 (refs 5, 8, 9), suggesting a critical role for pyroptosis and/or other inflammasome functions⁸⁻¹². In this study we sought to identify previously unknown *in vivo* signalling outputs of the NAIIP5/NLR4 inflammasome. To activate NAIIP5/NLR4 selectively, we delivered *Legionella pneumophila* flagellin (FlaA) to the cytosol by the fusion of FlaA to the amino-terminal domain of *Bacillus anthracis* lethal factor (LFn), which mediates cytosolic delivery through the anthrax protective antigen (PA) channel¹³. As expected, PA plus LFn-FlaA (here called FlaTox), but not PA or LFn-FlaA alone, activated the NAIIP5/NLR4 inflammasome in bone-marrow-derived macrophages (BMDMs), as indicated by cleavage of CASP1, release of lactate dehydrogenase and secretion of IL-1 β (Supplementary Fig. 1). Inflammasome activation was abrogated in *Casp1*^{-/-}, *Naip5*^{-/-} and *Nlr4*^{-/-} BMDMs (Supplementary Fig. 1b). A mutant form of FlaTox (FlaTox(AAA)), which is recognized by Toll-like receptor (TLR)-5 but not by NAIIP5 (ref. 4), did not activate pyroptosis (Supplementary Fig. 1a).

We then determined the effect of FlaTox administration *in vivo*. Intravenous or intraperitoneal delivery of FlaTox killed mice rapidly,

causing symptoms within 15 min and a mean time to death of about 30 min at saturating intravenous doses (Fig. 1a and Supplementary Fig. 1f). For subsequent experiments we administered a sublethal intraperitoneal dose. FlaTox-treated mice rapidly developed diarrhoea; however, histological analysis (Supplementary Fig. 2 and data not shown) after 30 min revealed no signs of pathology. Instead, we found fluid accumulation in the peritoneal cavity and intestine, but not in the kidneys or lungs (Supplementary Fig. 3). This fluid was lost from the blood, as the percentage volume of red blood cells (haematocrit) increased to 70–80% (normal 45–50%) within 30–40 min after FlaTox injection (Fig. 1b). As haematocrit rose, body temperature dropped, but with delayed kinetics (Fig. 1b). Haemoconcentration was the earliest pathological event that we detected after treatment with FlaTox, and is probably the primary cause of the ensuing circulatory collapse, hypothermia and death.

We found that only the complete toxin, rather than individual subunits or FlaTox(AAA), induced hypothermia and increased haematocrit (Fig. 1c, d and Supplementary Fig. 4a), showing that TLR signalling activated by flagellin or bacterial contaminants is insufficient to cause pathology. *Nlr4*^{-/-} mice were completely protected at all doses and time points tested (Fig. 1e, f and data not shown). *Naip5*^{-/-} and *Casp1*^{-/-} mice were completely protected in survival experiments (Supplementary Fig. 4b), but they showed a delayed haemoconcentration and hypothermic response (Fig. 1e, f). The moderate response of *Naip5*^{-/-} mice may be due to recognition of flagellin by NAIIP6 (refs 2, 3). Mice lacking tumour necrosis factor (*LT α /LT β /TNF α* ^{-/-}) or IL-1 β and IL-18 were as sensitive as wild-type (B6) mice (Fig. 1g, h and Supplementary Fig. 4b–d), ruling out an essential role for these cytokines in FlaTox-induced pathologies.

To identify the cell type(s) that respond to FlaTox, we generated bone marrow chimerae by using susceptible wild-type (B6) mice and resistant *Nlr4*^{-/-} mice. *Nlr4*^{-/-} mice reconstituted with wild-type bone marrow were completely susceptible to FlaTox (Fig. 2a, b). Wild-type mice reconstituted with *Nlr4*^{-/-} bone marrow also responded to FlaTox, but with delayed kinetics. These results suggest that at least two cell populations respond to FlaTox: first, radio-sensitive haematopoietic cells that are necessary and sufficient for the early response to FlaTox (0–30 min), and second, radio-resistant cells that respond after 30 min. Hereafter we focused on the early haematopoietic response (EHR).

The EHR was intact in mice deficient in mast cells, lymphocytes and neutrophils (Supplementary Fig. 5). By contrast, wild-type mice depleted of macrophages by using clodronate-loaded liposomes were almost completely protected from the EHR (Fig. 2c, d). Similarly, depletion of CD11b⁺ cells in FVB:CD11b-DTR mice conferred protection (Fig. 2e, f). Flow cytometric analysis revealed almost complete ablation of CD11b/F4-80⁺ resident peritoneal macrophages by both treatments (Supplementary Fig. 6a), whereas depletion of splenic and lamina propria macrophages was only partial (clodronate) or not

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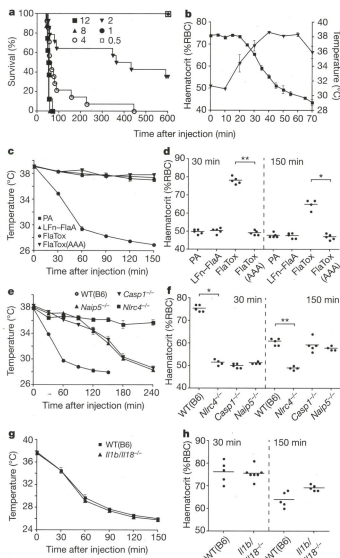


Figure 1 | Systemic cytosolic delivery of flagellin *in vivo* induces NAIP5/NLRCA-dependent but IL-1 β and IL-18-independent vascular leakage. a–h, Mice (wild-type (B6) or indicated genotypes) were injected intraperitoneally with FlaTox or the indicated proteins ($4 \mu\text{g g}^{-1}$ PA; $2 \mu\text{g g}^{-1}$ all others) and monitored for survival (a), haematocrit (b, d, f, h) or rectal temperature (c, e, g) at the indicated times. WT, wild type; RBC, red blood cells. The key in a indicates doses of LFn-FlaA (in $\mu\text{g g}^{-1}$). In b, squares show temperature, and triangles haematocrit. In a, $n = 5$ –14; in b, $n = 3$; in c–h, $n = 4$ –7. Data shown are pooled from multiple experiments (a) or are representative of at least two independent experiments. Error bars in b, c, e and g denote s.e.m. Asterisk, $P < 0.02$; two asterisks, $P < 0.009$ (Mann–Whitney test).

observed (CD11b-DTR) (Supplementary Fig. 6c, d). We therefore speculated that resident peritoneal macrophages might mediate responsiveness to FlaTox. Indeed, *Nlrp4*^{−/−} mice injected with wild-type resident peritoneal cells became sensitive to FlaTox (Fig. 2g). By contrast, spleen or bone marrow cells did not transfer responsiveness; unexpectedly, neither did wild-type thioglycollate-elicited peritoneal macrophages or BMDMs (Fig. 2g and Supplementary Fig. 6e). These data demonstrate a unique and critical function for resident peritoneal macrophages in the inflammasome-dependent *in vivo* response to FlaTox.

We speculated that peritoneal macrophages might initiate the EHR through the inflammasome-dependent secretion of a previously unidentified factor. Eicosanoids are paracrine signalling lipids that are crucial for the activation of inflammation and host defence, and can induce vascular permeability, vasodilation and leukocyte

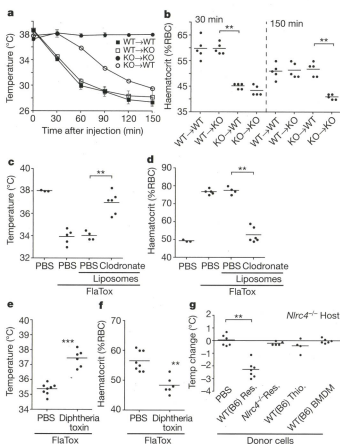


Figure 2 | Resident peritoneal macrophages are critical for the early FlaTox response *in vivo*. a–f, Mice were injected intraperitoneally with FlaTox, and rectal temperature (a, c, e) or haematocrit (b, d, f) were measured after 30 min or at the indicated times. a, b, Bone marrow chimeric mice (KO = *Nlrp4*^{−/−}; $n = 5$). c, d, Macrophage-depleted wild-type (B6) mice ($n = 3$ –6). e, f, CD11b⁺ cell-depleted FVB:CD11b-DTR mice ($n = 6$ –7). g, *Nlrp4*^{−/−} host mice injected intraperitoneally with 10^7 resident (Res.) or thioglycollate-elicited (Thio.) peritoneal cells or BMDMs of indicated genotype. Rectal temperature was measured 30 min after intraperitoneal injection of FlaTox ($8 \mu\text{g g}^{-1}$ PA + $4 \mu\text{g g}^{-1}$ LFn-FlaA). Data shown are pooled from multiple experiments (g) or are representative of at least three independent experiments (a–f). Error bars in a denote s.e.m. Two asterisks, $P < 0.01$; three asterisks, $P = 0.001$ (Mann–Whitney test).

chemotaxis^{13–16}. Eicosanoids are synthesized when arachidonic acid released from cell membranes by phospholipases is converted into prostaglandins (PGs) and thromboxanes downstream of the cyclooxygenases (COX-1 and COX-2) or into hydroxyeicosatetraenoic acids (HETEs) and leukotrienes (LTs) downstream of the lipoxygenases (12/15-LOX and 5-LOX) (Supplementary Fig. 7). Direct intraperitoneal injection of prostaglandins leads to diarrhoea and fluid accumulation in the gut^{17,18}, both hallmarks of FlaTox-induced pathology.

We therefore speculated that resident peritoneal macrophages, the specific cells required for the EHR (Fig. 2), produce eicosanoids in response to inflammasome activation. Using liquid chromatography–tandem mass spectrometry (LC–MS/MS) lipidomic analysis and enzyme immunoassay, we detected rapid biosynthesis of numerous COX-dependent and LOX-dependent eicosanoids including LTB₄, PGE₂ and cysteinyl LTs in supernatants of peritoneal lavage cells treated *ex vivo* with FlaTox, whereas the FlaTox(AAA) mutant elicited a much weaker response (Fig. 3 and Supplementary Fig. 8a, b). Moreover, eicosanoid induction required NAIP5, NLRCA and CASP1 (Fig. 3b and Supplementary Fig. 8c). LTB₄/PGE₂ induction by PA or LFn-FlaA alone was equivalent to stimulation with FlaTox(AAA) or lipopolysaccharide, further demonstrating that TLR signalling cannot account for their rapid biosynthesis (Fig. 3c and Supplementary

Fig. 8b). The flagellated intracellular pathogen *Salmonella enterica* serovar Typhimurium (*S. typhimurium*) also elicited inflammasome-dependent eicosanoid biosynthesis in a similar manner to FlaTox (Fig. 3d and Supplementary Fig. 8d), demonstrating that this pathway is activated during live infection.

Similarly to the *ex vivo* results, LC-MS/MS analysis of peritoneal lavage fluid from mice treated with FlaTox for 20 min revealed robust inflammasome-dependent eicosanoid biosynthesis *in vivo* (Supplementary Fig. 9). Some residual eicosanoid biosynthesis (particularly of PGE₂) was observed after treatment with FlaTox(AAA). This residual response is probably due to bacterial contaminants (for example lipopolysaccharide) activating peritoneal cells other than macrophages, because macrophages did not produce PGE₂ in response to stimulation for 30 min with lipopolysaccharide or FlaTox(AAA) (Fig. 3c). However, because this residual response did not produce symptoms (Fig. 1c, d) and eicosanoids have only paracrine effects, the FlaTox-induced pathology is probably a localized response mediated by resident peritoneal macrophages and/or the synergistic effects of multiple eicosanoids. FlaTox did not result in the detectable production of anti-inflammatory lipoxins¹⁹. Taken together, our results show that inflammasome activation results in an 'eicosanoid storm' *ex vivo* and *in vivo*, characterized by the broad biosynthesis of both LOX and COX products, with a bias towards pro-inflammatory lipids.

How does inflammasome activation induce eicosanoid biosynthesis? Although cells express several initiating A₂ phospholipases,

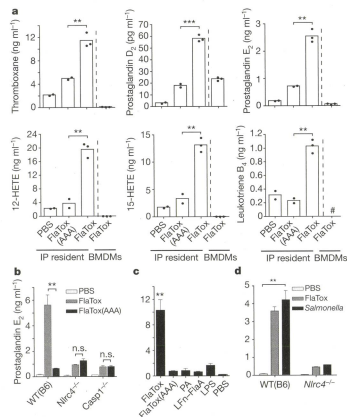


Figure 3 | Inflammasome-dependent eicosanoid biosynthesis. **a**, LC-MS/MS-based lipidomics of wild-type (B6) BMDMs or resident peritoneal (IP) cells incubated for 30 min *ex vivo* with FlaTox (20 $\mu\text{g ml}^{-1}$ PA + 10 $\mu\text{g ml}^{-1}$ LF_nBA). **b–d**, PGE₂ immunosay of resident peritoneal macrophages treated *ex vivo* with FlaTox, the indicated proteins (10 $\mu\text{g ml}^{-1}$ PA in **d**; 5 $\mu\text{g ml}^{-1}$ in all others), lipopolysaccharide (c, 1 $\mu\text{g ml}^{-1}$) or *S. typhimurium* (d, multiplicity of infection = 5) and incubated for 30 min (**b**, **c**) or 180 min (**d**). Data shown are representative of at least two (**d**) or three (**a–c**) independent experiments. Error bars in **b–d** denote s.e.m. Two asterisks, $P < 0.01$; three asterisks, $P < 0.0005$ (Student's *t*-test). Hash sign, not detected.

Ca²⁺-dependent cytosolic phospholipase A₂ (cPLA₂) accounts for nearly all eicosanoid biosynthesis in peritoneal macrophages treated with a Ca²⁺ ionophore²⁰. Inhibition of cPLA₂ also blocked LTB₄ and PGE₂ production but not pyroptosis in response to FlaTox (Fig. 4a and Supplementary Fig. 8e). An increase in intracellular Ca²⁺ is both necessary and sufficient for cPLA₂ activation²¹; notably, the earliest detectable CASP1-dependent events in BMDMs infected with *S. typhimurium* are the formation of plasma membrane pores and the influx of Ca²⁺ (refs 22, 23). We observed that CASP1-dependent Ca²⁺ influx, comparable in magnitude to an ionomycin control (Supplementary Fig. 10), preceded cell lysis (79 $\pm$ 29 s before the onset of membrane blebbing) in resident peritoneal macrophages (Fig. 4b, c). This Ca²⁺ influx seems to be critical for eicosanoid biosynthesis but dispensable for pyroptosis in response to FlaTox, because the intracellular Ca²⁺ chelator bis-(*o*-aminophenoxy)ethane-*N,N,N',N'*-tetraacetic acid acetoxymethyl ester (BAPTA-AM) inhibited PGE₂ and LTB₄ production without blocking lactate dehydrogenase (LDH) release (Fig. 4d and Supplementary Fig. 8f). Macrophages treated with glycine to inhibit pyroptosis²² still produced PGE₂ in response to FlaTox, whereas cells lysed by digitonin or H₂O₂ did not, further indicating that eicosanoid production and cell lysis are separable events (Supplementary Fig. 11). Taken together, our results suggest a model (Supplementary Fig. 12) in which CASP1 activation results in rapid Ca²⁺ flux (Fig. 4b) that leads to cPLA₂ activation and downstream eicosanoid biosynthesis. Identification of a CASP1 substrate required for Ca²⁺ influx is an important, but technically challenging, area for future research because proteomic studies to identify novel substrates of CASP1 (refs 24–26) have so far yielded limited insight.

Although cPLA₂ activity is regulated primarily by Ca²⁺ influx, its activity can be enhanced by mitogen-activated protein kinase (MAPK)-dependent phosphorylation²⁷. We wondered whether TLR signalling activated by FlaTox (FlaA or bacterial contaminants) might enhance cPLA₂ activity through downstream MAPKs. Indeed, cPLA₂ in resident peritoneal cells was phosphorylated after treatment with FlaTox, and this was inflammasome-independent but Myd88/Trif-dependent (Fig. 4e). Accordingly, LTB₄ production in response to FlaTox was partly attenuated in Myd88/Trif^{-/-} cells, and Myd88/Trif^{-/-} mice were partly protected *in vivo* (Supplementary Fig. 13). Thus, although inflammasome-dependent Ca²⁺ flux is both sufficient and necessary for eicosanoid production in response to FlaTox, TLR signalling, which is expected to accompany natural infection, can synergize with inflammasome activation to produce maximal responses.

We further investigated the basis for the cell-type specificity of inflammasome-dependent eicosanoid biosynthesis. Consistent with the inability of BMDMs to transfer responsiveness to FlaTox *in vivo* (Fig. 2g), we observed no eicosanoid production by LC-MS/MS in BMDMs treated with FlaTox for 30 min (Fig. 3a). Even at 2 h after treatment, when most BMDMs have undergone pyroptosis, we could not detect PGE₂ or LTB₄ production (Fig. 4f, g and Supplementary Fig. 8g, h). *Cox1*, *Alox12/15* and *Alox5*, which encode key enzymes required for eicosanoid biosynthesis, are expressed at much higher levels (10–1,000-fold) in CD11b/F4/80^{hi} resident peritoneal macrophages than in BMDMs or thioglycollate-elicited CD11b/F4/80^{hi} cells (Fig. 4h–j). Resident peritoneal macrophages are therefore uniquely primed for eicosanoid responses. Most characterization of inflammasomes has relied on BMDMs, which perhaps explains why a link to eicosanoid biosynthesis has not been described. We speculate that the primed state of resting peritoneal macrophages may be a general characteristic of resident macrophages guarding sites of pathogen entry; it will be important to further explore the lineage-specific regulation of inflammasome function *in vivo*.

To test whether eicosanoids contribute to FlaTox-induced pathology, we injected B6/129P2 *Cox1*^{-/-} mice and littermate controls with FlaTox, and found that the EHR was significantly attenuated in these mice ($P < 0.0007$; Fig. 4k, l) despite intact pyroptosis (Supplementary Fig. 14). As expected, given that FlaTox induces the broad biosynthesis

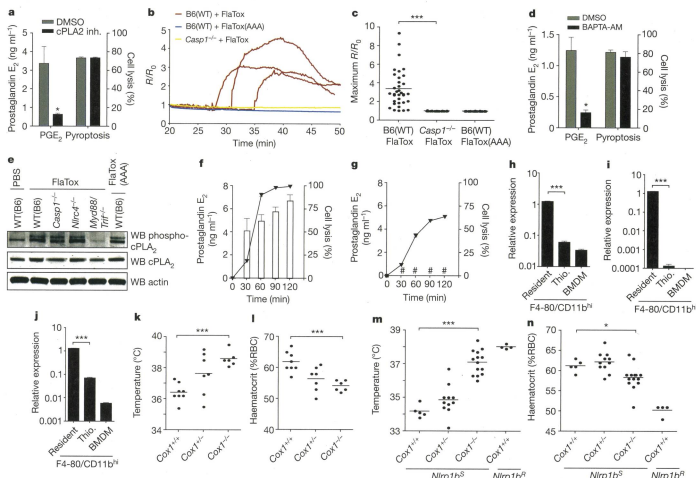


Figure 4 | Mechanism and *in vivo* role of eicosanoid production. **a, d**, PGE₂ immunoassay (30 min) or LDH assay (2 h) on supernatants from wild-type (B6) resident peritoneal macrophages pretreated for 45 min with dimethylsulphoxide (DMSO), cPLA₂ inhibitor (a, 0.2 μM pyrrophenone) or BAPTA-AM (d, 10 μM) then Flatox + DMSO/inhibitor. **b, c**, Wild-type (B6) or *Cox1*^{-/-} resident peritoneal macrophages were treated with Flatox or Flatox(AAA) and Ca²⁺ indicator (Fluo-4; 2.5 mM) and fluorescence/background (*R/R*₀) was quantified over time. **e**, Representative cell traces. **c**, Maximum *R/R*₀ for each cell. **e**, Resident peritoneal cells of indicated genotype treated for 30 min as indicated. Cell lysates were probed for indicated proteins by western blot (WB). **f, g**, Resident peritoneal macrophages (**f**) or BMDMs (**g**) treated with Flatox. PGE₂ (bars) and cell lysis (line) were measured over time as in **a–h–j**. Expression of *Cox1* (**h**), *Alox12/15* (**i**) and *Alox5*

(**j**) measured by quantitative RT-PCR in BMDMs and resident peritoneal macrophages or thioglycollate-elicited peritoneal cells (thio.) sorted for CD11b⁺ F4/80^{hi}. **k–n**, Mice were injected intraperitoneally with Flatox (**k, l**) or intravenously with anthrax lethal toxin (**m, n**; 200 μg PA + 100 μg lethal factor); rectal temperature (**k, m**) and haematocrit (**l, n**) were measured after 30 min (**k, l**) or 45 min (**m, n**). **k, l**, B6;129P2-*Cox1*^{-/-} mice and littermate controls. **m, n**, *Cox1*^{-/-} mice and littermate controls expressing a lethal-toxin-sensitive (S) or resistant (R) *Nlrp1b* allele. Data are pooled from multiple experiments (**k–n**) or are representative of at least two (**b, c, h–j**) or three (**a, d–g**) independent experiments. Error bars in **a, d** and **f** denote s.e. Asterisk, *P* < 0.04; two asterisks, *P* < 0.006; three asterisks, *P* < 0.0007 (**k–n**, Mann–Whitney test; **a, c, d, h–j**, Student's *t*-test). Hash sign, not detected.

of both COX-1-dependent and COX-1-independent eicosanoids, the role of COX-1 was masked at high doses of Flatox or at later time points (data not shown), suggesting a contribution of COX-1-independent eicosanoids or other unidentified factors. In confirmation of the results with *Cox1*^{-/-} mice, chemical inhibition of COX-1 protected mice from a low dose of Flatox (Supplementary Fig. 15). Inhibition of the inducible enzyme COX-2 or the genetic deletion of *Alox5* had no effect, although their contribution may be masked by functional redundancy of downstream eicosanoids (Supplementary Fig. 15). These data link the production of COX-1-dependent eicosanoids to the pathology associated with *in vivo* delivery of Flatox, which is consistent with earlier reports that purified prostaglandins are sufficient to cause fluid accumulation and diarrhoea^{17,18}.

We speculated that other inflammasomes might also lead to eicosanoid production *in vivo*. For example, anthrax lethal toxin activates the NLRP1B inflammasome²⁸, resulting in a rapid (but transient and non-lethal) hypothermic response²⁸. Because C57BL/6 mice express a non-functional allele of *Nlrp1b* (*Nlrp1b*^B), we injected *Cox1*^{+/-} mice expressing the sensitive 129 allele of *Nlrp1b* (*Nlrp1b*^S).

These mice developed diarrhoea, decreased body temperature and an inflammasome-dependent increase in haematocrit (Fig. 4m, n). As in Flatox-treated mice, deletion of *Cox1* attenuated these early pathologies of lethal toxin (Fig. 4m, n), indicating that this naturally occurring bacterial toxin activates a similar, though non-lethal, inflammasome pathway in mice.

Whereas many cellular immune responses require *de novo* transcription, the NAIIP5/NLR4 and NLRP1B inflammasomes assemble from preformed protein components to activate a proteolytic cascade. These inflammasomes are therefore ideally positioned to mediate rapid responses to infection. Initiated within minutes of flagellin detection, the inflammasome-dependent eicosanoid production described here is one of the most rapid innate immune cellular responses known *in vivo*. Although performed *in vivo*, the results presented here rely on the systemic administration of toxins. It will be important to explore the role of inflammasome-dependent eicosanoids during live infection. When restricted to the site of infection, such eicosanoids may have a beneficial role in host defence, for example by rapidly increasing local vascular permeability, allowing an influx of antibody,

complement and immune cells. Future studies should also evaluate a role for eicosanoids in other inflammasome-dependent phenotypes previously described *in vivo*. Indeed, our results suggest that the signalling outputs of inflammasomes may be much broader than has previously been realized.

METHODS SUMMARY

Toxin delivery and pathology. Recombinant proteins (PA, LFn-FlaA, LFn-FlaA(AAA) and LF) were purified from *Escherichia coli* as described previously²⁹, and endotoxin was removed with Detoxi-Gel (Pierce). LFn-FlaA(AAA) was generated by mutating the three carboxy-terminal leucines of *L. pneumophila* flagellin to alanine³⁰. Unless otherwise noted, standard toxin doses were $2 \mu\text{g g}^{-1}$ body weight of LFn-FlaA *in vivo* (200 μl intraperitoneally) and $5 \mu\text{g ml}^{-1}$ LFn-FlaA *in vitro*. PA dose was always $2 \times \text{LFn-FlaA}$. Rectal temperature was measured with a MicroTherma 2T thermometer (Braintree Scientific). Blood for haematocrit was collected by retro-orbital bleed into StatSpin microhaematocrit tubes (Fisher Scientific).

Mice. For bone marrow chimaeras, mice were irradiated twice with 600 rad 4 h apart, injected with 5×10^6 donor cells, and analysed after 12–15 weeks. Macrophages were depleted for 48 h with liposome-encapsulated clodronate (N.V.R.) (500 μl intraperitoneally and 200 μl intravenously). CD11b⁺ cells were depleted for 24 h in FVB-Tg(CD11b/EGFP)34Lan⁺ mice with 25 ng g^{-1} body weight (intraperitoneally) of diphtheria toxin (Sigma-Aldrich).

Lipidomics. Lipid autotides were extracted by solid phase with Sampli ODS-C₁₈ cartridges (Agilent Technologies). Eicosanoids and docosanoids were identified and quantified with a triple-quadrupole linear ion-trap LC-MS/MS system (MDS SCIEX 3200 QTRAP) equipped with a Kinetex C₁₈ mini-bore column.

Statistical analysis. Statistical differences were calculated with an unpaired two-tailed Student's *t*-test (*in vitro/ex vivo*) or two-tailed non-parametric Mann-Whitney test (*in vivo*) using GraphPad Prism 4.0b.

Full Methods and any associated references are available in the online version of the paper.

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Paramutation in *Drosophila* linked to emergence of a piRNA-producing locus

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A paramutation is an epigenetic interaction between two alleles of a locus, through which one allele induces a heritable modification in the other allele without modifying the DNA sequence^{1,2}. The paramutated allele itself becomes paramutagenic, that is, capable of epigenetically converting a new paramutable allele. Here we describe a case of paramutation in animals showing long-term transmission over generations. We previously characterized a homology-dependent silencing mechanism referred to as the *trans*-silencing effect (TSE), involved in *P*-transposable-element repression in the germ line^{3–5}. We now show that clusters of *P*-element-derived transgenes that induce strong TSE^{6,7} can convert other homologous transgene clusters incapable of TSE into strong silencers, which transmit the acquired silencing capacity through 50 generations. The paramutation occurs without any need for chromosome pairing between the paramutagenic and the paramutated loci, and is mediated by maternal inheritance of cytoplasm carrying Piwi-interacting RNAs (piRNAs) homologous to the transgenes. The repression capacity of the paramutated locus is abolished by a loss-of-function mutation of the *aubergine* gene involved in piRNA biogenesis, but not by a loss-of-function mutation of the *Dicer-2* gene involved in siRNA production. The paramutated cluster, previously producing barely detectable levels of piRNAs, is converted into a stable, strong piRNA-producing locus by the paramutation and becomes fully paramutagenic itself. Our work provides a genetic model for the emergence of piRNA loci, as well as for RNA-mediated *trans*-generational repression of transposable elements.

Paramutations have been well described in plants^{1,2,8–12}. The best characterized is the *bl* paramutation in maize, which involves a small RNA silencing pathway^{13–15}, changes in DNA methylation levels and chromatin modifications¹⁶, and shows full penetrance and stability across generations. Paramutation-like phenomena involving microRNAs have been described in mice^{17,18}. However, long-term inheritance of a paramutation through generations has not been reported so far in animals.

In *Drosophila melanogaster*, transposition of *P* elements causes hybrid dysgenesis, a syndrome of genetic abnormalities including a high mutation rate, chromosome rearrangements and sterility^{19,20}. In natural populations, telomeric *P* elements inserted in heterochromatic telomere-associated sequences (TAS) are master sites for establishing *P*-element repression in the germ line^{21–23}. In laboratory lines (for example, *P*-1152), *P*-lacZ transgenes inserted in TAS mimics telomeric *P* elements by repressing germline expression of reporter transgenes inserted at distant euchromatic sites, through a homology-dependent silencing mechanism, TSE^{3–5,24}. TSE is strongly sensitive to mutations affecting the piRNA pathway²⁵. Its establishment involves both genetic and epigenetic components: a chromosomal copy of the telomeric silencer transgene must be either paternally or maternally inherited, and a cytoplasmic component containing small RNAs homologous to the transgene must be maternally inherited^{4,5}. In

addition to telomeric loci, we found that *T-1*, a tandem repeat cluster of *P*-lacZ transgenes inserted in the middle of chromosome arm 2R (50C), can also trigger a strong TSE⁷. *T-1* and other *P*-lacZ clusters inserted at the same locus (Supplementary Fig. 1) induce ectopic heterochromatin and show variegation of the *white* gene marker in the eye, a phenomenon termed repeat-induced gene silencing^{6,26}. However, *T-1* triggers strong silencing of various TSE reporter transgenes in the germ line⁷, whereas the other transgene clusters at this locus, including *BX2*, which contains the same number of transgene repeats as *T-1*, did not induce detectable TSE (Supplementary Table 1).

The epigenetic properties of *T-1* were analysed together with those of the *P*-1152 telomeric silencer and the *BX2* cluster as controls. *T-1* and *P*-1152 showed typical maternal transmission of TSE: strong repression occurred in the germ line of progeny when the silencer was maternally inherited (Fig. 1a), whereas weak or null repression was detected when the silencer was paternally inherited (Fig. 1b). *BX2* showed no repression capacity in these crosses. To analyse the relationship between TSE and piRNAs, we sequenced 19–29-nucleotide RNAs from ovaries of *T-1*, *P*-1152 or *BX2* females (Supplementary Table 2). Abundant small RNAs matched the *T-1* sequences in the library from hemizygous females having inherited the *T-1* locus maternally (Fig. 1c), but not paternally (Fig. 1d). Among these species, the 23–28-nucleotide RNAs showed the typical 'ping-pong' signature of piRNA biogenesis²⁷, including a bias for a 5' U (1U) and a strong tendency to form sense–antisense pairs with complementarity over their first ten nucleotides (Supplementary Fig. 2). In addition to piRNAs, short interfering RNAs (siRNAs) have been shown to be produced by previously characterized piRNA loci²⁸. Similarly, *T-1* produced a significant fraction of 21-nucleotide RNAs (Fig. 1c) that do not show the ping-pong signature of piRNAs and probably correspond to siRNAs (Supplementary Fig. 3a). In agreement with a previous report²⁹, small RNAs with similar features were produced by *P*-1152 in hemizygous females having inherited the *P*-1152 locus maternally (Fig. 1f). Homozygous *P*-1152 females produced about twice as many piRNAs as these hemizygous females (Supplementary Fig. 4). Finally, only a very low level of small RNAs was produced that matched *BX2* in hemizygous females from the *BX2* line (Fig. 1e). Hence, maternal inheritance of *T-1*, as well as *P*-1152, is associated with both the production of piRNAs derived from these loci and the capacity of these loci to mediate TSE, thereby linking silencing and piRNAs in this system. We next tested epigenetic interactions between the *P*-1152 telomeric silencer and *T-1*, and found that chromosomal and maternally transmitted components of *T-1* and *P*-1152 can complement each other to induce TSE (Supplementary Fig. 5), consistent with the presence of piRNAs matching *P*-lacZ sequences in ovaries of both *T-1* and *P*-1152 females.

To investigate possible transfer of epigenetic information between *T-1* and the inactive *BX2* locus, we crossed hemizygous *T-1* females

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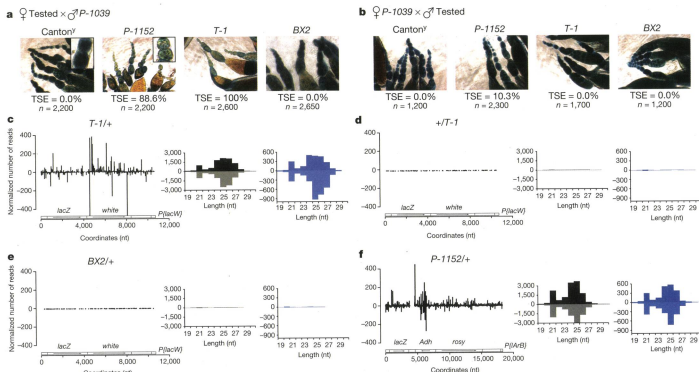


Figure 1 | Maternal inheritance of *P-1152* and *T-1* repression capacities correlates with the presence of *T-1*- or *P-1152*-derived piRNAs in ovaries of female progeny. **a**, **b**, Maternal (**a**) and paternal (**b**) inheritance of TSE mediated by *P-1152*, *T-1* or *BX2* was tested using the *P-1039* TSE reporter transgene. *lacZ* staining of ovaries of G₁ females from the indicated crosses was performed, and TSE was expressed as the percentage of repressed egg chambers among the total number (*n*) of egg chambers analysed. Female and male Canton⁺ flies are devoid of any transgene and were used as controls. Note that *lacZ* staining of follicle cells surrounding egg chambers (shown at higher

with hemizygous *BX2* males, and recovered female progeny that had not inherited the *T-1* locus and carrying a paternally inherited *BX2* locus (Fig. 2). These females showed marked silencing of the TSE reporter transgene, indicating that the cytoplasm of *T-1* oocytes can

magnification in insets) is observed in all ovaries because TSE only occurs in the germ line¹. Original magnification, ×20. **c–f**, Deep sequencing of small RNAs from ovaries of the indicated genotypes in which the maternally inherited allele is always indicated first. Plots show the abundance of 19–30-nucleotide (nt) small RNAs matching *P(lacW)* (**c–e**) or *P(larB)* (**f**). Histograms show the length distributions of small RNAs matching *P(lacW)* or *P(larB)* (dark bars), or only the *lacZ* sequence in these elements (blue bars). Positive and negative values correspond to sense and antisense reads, respectively.

confer new silencing capacities to the inactive allele of the *BX2* locus. This *de novo* silencing allele will be hereafter referred to as *BX2** to differentiate it from the initial *BX2* allele never having been exposed to a *T-1* cytoplasm.

A *BX2** line was established and analysed in successive generations (Fig. 3a). Notably, second generation (G₂) *BX2** females from test crosses with males carrying a TSE reporter transgene still showed a complete TSE (Fig. 3b). This capacity to mediate TSE was fully maintained over 25 generations of the *BX2** line (TSE = 100%, *n* = 4,600). TSE remained very strong between G₃₂ and G₅₅ (99.4%, *n* = 22,700) showing a reversion rate less than 0.5% per generation at 25 °C (Supplementary Discussion). We conclude that maternally inherited factors from the *T-1* strain stably paramutated the *BX2* locus.

In contrast to *BX2* females, ovaries of G₃ *BX2** females contained abundant small RNAs matching the *BX2* sequence (Fig. 3c and Supplementary Table 2) with a profile similar to the one observed in *T-1* females (see Fig. 1c). The size distribution of these small RNAs showed a large peak corresponding to 23–28-nucleotide small RNAs with the piRNA ping-pong signature (Supplementary Fig. 2), as well as a discrete peak corresponding to a 21-nucleotide siRNA-like species of RNAs. Therefore, the acquired capacity of the *BX2** allele to mediate TSE correlates with the *de novo* production of *lacZ*-derived small RNAs from this locus. Finally, *BX2**-derived small RNAs were continuously produced in ovaries over at least 42 generations of a *BX2** line (Fig. 3d and Supplementary Figs 2 and 3). Together, these data indicate that the *BX2** paramutation is associated with stable production of high levels of small RNAs from the *BX2* locus in ovaries.

We next tested whether the paramutated *BX2** allele is paramutagenic. We crossed hemizygous *BX2** females with hemizygous naive *BX2* males and recovered female progeny having inherited the

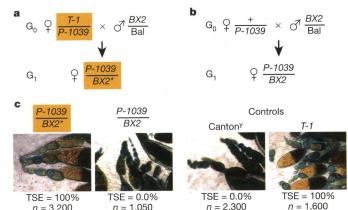


Figure 2 | Epigenetic induction of *BX2 by *T-1*.** **a**, *T-1* females carrying the TSE reporter transgene *P-1039* were crossed to *BX2* males carrying a balancer chromosome (Bal). *BX2** female progeny having inherited cytoplasm from *T-1* mothers (orange background) and a *BX2* chromosome from fathers were stained for *lacZ*. **b**, Females carrying only the TSE reporter *P-1039* were crossed to *BX2* males. Female progeny from this cross were stained for *lacZ*. **c**, *P-1039*/*BX2** female progeny from the cross in **a** showed complete TSE, which was scored as indicated in Fig. 1. *P-1039*/*BX2* female progeny from the cross in **b** did not show TSE. Controls correspond to crosses between Canton⁺ (devoid of any transgene) or *T-1* females with *P-1039* males, which resulted in progeny showing null and complete TSE, respectively. Original magnification, ×20.

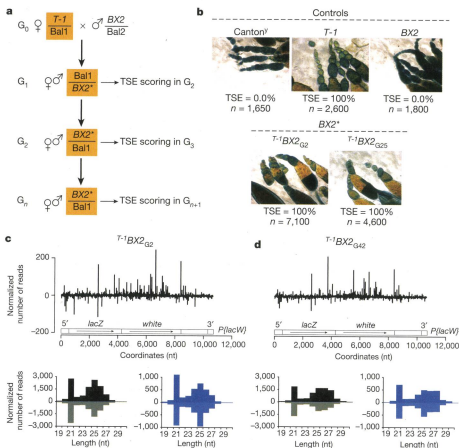


Figure 3 | $BX2^*$ paramutation occurs and is associated to the production of small RNAs by the $BX2$ cluster. **a**, $BX2^*$ lines were established as indicated. Bal1 and Bal2 are balancer chromosomes carrying distinct phenotypic markers. $BX2^*$ siblings were crossed at each generation to perpetuate the $BX2^*$ line. In addition, $BX2^*$ females were crossed at various generations (G_0) to males carrying the $P-1039$ reporter, to score the TSE of $BX2^*$ in the G_{n+1} female progeny. **b**, TSE in $BX2^*$ females from generations G_2 and G_{25} , and in progeny of crosses from Canton⁺, $T-1$ and $BX2$ females with $P-1039$ males as controls. $T-1$ $BX2_{G25}$ indicates that $BX2^*$ females inherited cytoplasm from $T-1$ females 25 generations before the present cross. TSE was scored as indicated in Fig. 1. Original magnification, $\times 20$. **c, d**, Abundance (top) and length distribution (dark histograms) of 19–30-nucleotide small RNAs matching the $P[lacW]$ transgene in ovaries from hemizygous $BX2^*$ females from generation G_2 (**c**) and G_{42} (**d**). Length distributions of the subsets of small RNAs only matching *lacZ* are shown as blue histograms. Positive and negative values correspond to sense and antisense RNA, respectively.

cytoplasm of $BX2^*$ mothers and the $BX2$ locus from fathers (Fig. 4a). This $BX2$ allele was then assessed in generation G_2 for its capacity to silence a TSE reporter transgene in the germline. Notably, we observed a complete TSE (Fig. 4a), indicating that the paternally inherited $BX2$ allele was paramutated through maternal inheritance of $BX2^*$ cytoplasm. This newly paramutated $BX2$ allele, which corresponds to a second-order paramutation, will be hereafter referred to as $BX2^{*2}$. A $BX2^{*2}$ line was established and showed stable TSE over 36 generations (Fig. 4a). Moreover, this line retained the capacity to produce large amounts of $BX2^{*2}$ -derived small RNAs after 36 generations (Fig. 4b). Following an identical mating scheme, $BX2^{*2}$ females were able to paramutate a paternally inherited $BX2$ locus, generating a third-order $BX2^{*3}$ paramutated allele that showed full TSE capacity over 10 generations. Applying this procedure recurrently, we generated a

fifth-order paramutated $BX2^{*5}$ allele that showed full TSE capacity (Supplementary Fig. 6). In conclusion, the conversion of $BX2$ to $BX2^*$ by $T-1$ maternal cytoplasm has all the properties of a paramutation, because it is stable over generations and the paramutated allele shows secondary paramutagenicity.

Interestingly, $T-1$ also fully paramutated $C2$, another seven-copy transgene inserted at the same location (Supplementary Fig. 1), whereas lower-copy-number transgenes at this location were paramutated only transiently (Supplementary Table 3). A similar unstable paramutation interaction was also observed between the non-allelic $P-1152$ and $BX2$ loci (Supplementary Fig. 7).

As paramutation in this system is correlated with the production of $BX2^*$ -derived piRNAs and siRNAs, we investigated the effect of *aubergine* and *Dicer-2* loss of function on a paramutated $BX2$ cluster.

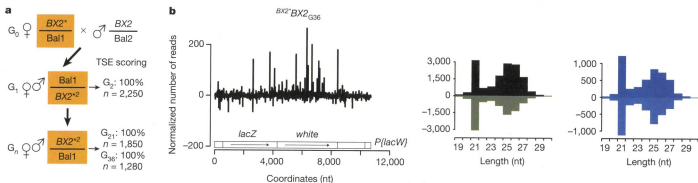


Figure 4 | Paramutated $BX2^*$ is paramutagenic. **a**, $BX2^*$ females were crossed with $BX2$ males and a $BX2^{*2}$ line (second-order paramutation) was established as indicated. Bal1 and Bal2 are balancer chromosomes. $BX2^{*2}$ siblings were crossed at various generations to perpetuate the $BX2^{*2}$ line. In addition, $BX2^{*2}$ females were crossed at each generation (G_0) with males carrying the $P-1039$ reporter transgene to score the TSE of $BX2^{*2}$ in the G_{n+1}

female progeny. **b**, Abundance (graph on the left) and length distribution (black histogram in the middle) of 19–30-nucleotide small RNAs matching the $P[lacW]$ transgene in ovaries from hemizygous $BX2^{*2}$ females from generation G_{36} . Length distribution of the subset of small RNAs only matching *lacZ* is shown in the blue histogram on the right.

The silencing capacity of the *BX2²* cluster was completely abolished in homozygous *aubergine* mutants, whereas strong silencing still took place in *Dicer-2* homozygous mutants (Supplementary Fig. 8). Moreover, the *BX2²* locus still showed full repression capacity after four generations in a *Dicer-2* homozygous mutant context. Hence, the *BX2²* silencing activity requires piRNAs, whereas neither *BX2²* activity nor inheritance rely on siRNAs. In maize, paramutation can be induced by a non-allelic transgene producing *b1* -repeat double-stranded RNA (dsRNA) and siRNAs¹⁵ and epigenetic inheritance of the *K1^{mi1Alf}* mutant allele in mice seems to result from paternal as well as maternal transmission of small RNAs¹⁷. These data indicate that paramutations may in some instances involve small RNAs without interactions between alleles at the DNA or chromatin levels. Our findings that, in *Drosophila* , the *BX2* paramutation is triggered by cytoplasmic inheritance strongly support this view.

Finally, we investigated the effect of the paramutation on transcription of the *BX2* locus by quantitative polymerase chain reaction with reverse transcription (RT-qPCR). *BX2* and *BX2²* showed similar steady-state levels of both sense and antisense transcripts (Supplementary Fig. 9). This observation suggests that paramutation, rather than increasing the pool of piRNA precursor transcripts, activates their downstream processing into piRNAs. Thus, the maternally transmitted piRNAs could trigger production of primary piRNAs and/or ping-pong amplification of secondary piRNAs in the nuage. As paramutation is accompanied by *de novo* production of high levels of piRNA, it provides an invaluable model to determine the molecular events involved in the genesis of piRNA loci.

METHODS SUMMARY

All crosses were performed at 25 °C. *lacZ* expression assays were carried out using X-gal overnight staining²⁰. The *P-lacZ* -white construct (named *P(lacW)*) contains the *P-lacZ* translational fusion and is marked by the mini-white gene (Supplementary Fig. 1 and Supplementary Table 4). Small RNA libraries from hand-dissected ovaries were prepared using the Illumina kit and sequenced using an Illumina Genome Analyzer II or an Illumina HiSeq-2000, following the manufacturer's instructions. For library comparisons, read counts were normalized to the total number of small RNAs that matched the *D. melanogaster* genome and did not correspond to abundant cellular RNAs (ribosomal RNA, transfer RNA and small nuclear RNAs). Overlap signatures were computed for each sequence data set by collecting the appropriate RNA reads matching *P* transgenes and calculating overlap frequencies with RNA reads on the opposite strand.

Full Methods and any associated references are available in the online version of the paper.

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Author Contributions Genetic experiments were conceived by A.D.V., A.B. and S.R., and performed by A.D.V., A.B., C.H., V.D., L.T. and S.R. L.T. conceived and performed molecular mapping of the clusters and Southern blot analysis. Deep-sequencing analysis was conceived by A.D.V., A.-L.B., S.R. and C.A., and performed by A.D.V. and A.-L.B. Bioinformatic analysis was conceived and performed by C.A. RT-qPCR was conceived and performed by A.B., S.R., A.D.V., A.B. and C.A. wrote the paper and all authors discussed the results.

Author Information Small RNA sequences have been deposited at the National Center for Biotechnology Information under accession SRP012172. Reprints and permissions information is available at www.nature.com/reprints. The authors declare no competing financial interests. Readers are welcome to comment on the online version of the paper. Correspondence and requests for materials should be addressed to S.R. (stephane.ronsseay@upmc.fr) or C.A. (christophe.antoniewski@upmc.fr).

Burkitt lymphoma pathogenesis and therapeutic targets from structural and functional genomics

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Burkitt's lymphoma (BL) can often be cured by intensive chemotherapy, but the toxicity of such therapy precludes its use in the elderly and in patients with endemic BL in developing countries, necessitating new strategies¹. The normal germinal centre B cell is the presumed cell of origin for both BL and diffuse large B-cell lymphoma (DLBCL), yet gene expression analysis suggests that these malignancies may use different oncogenic pathways². BL is subdivided into a sporadic subtype that is diagnosed in developed countries, the Epstein-Barr-virus-associated endemic subtype, and an HIV-associated subtype, but it is unclear whether these subtypes use similar or divergent oncogenic mechanisms. Here we used high-throughput RNA sequencing and RNA interference screening to discover essential regulatory pathways in BL that cooperate with *MYC*, the defining oncogene of this cancer. In 70% of sporadic BL cases, mutations affecting the transcription factor *TCF3* (E2A) or its negative regulator *ID3* fostered *TCF3* dependency. *TCF3* activated the pro-survival phosphatidylinositol-3-OH kinase pathway in BL, in part by augmenting tonic B-cell receptor signalling. In 38% of sporadic BL cases, oncogenic *CND3* mutations produced highly stable cyclin D3 isoforms that drive cell cycle progression. These findings suggest opportunities to improve therapy for patients with BL.

We performed RNA resequencing (RNA-seq) on 28 sporadic BL patient biopsies and 13 BL cell lines and analysed published RNA-seq data from 52 germinal centre B-cell-like (GCB) DLBCL cases and 28 activated B-cell-like (ABC) DLBCL cases³. Elimination of known single-nucleotide polymorphisms left a set of putative single-nucleotide variants, of which 95% (495 out of 518) were confirmed by Sanger sequencing (Supplementary Tables 1 and 2).

Mutations in many genes were more frequent in BL than in DLBCL, including *MYC*, as well as many not previously implicated in this lymphoma subtype (Fig. 1, Supplementary Fig. 1a and Supplementary Table 1). Conversely, recurrently mutated genes in DLBCL^{3–7} (*EHZ2*, *SGK1*, *BCL2*, *CD79B*, *MYD88*) were rarely, if ever, mutated in BL. Several genes were mutated in BL and DLBCL (*TP53*, *GNAI3*, *MKI67*, *CND3*), although *TP53* mutations were more common in BL

(Fig. 1 and Supplementary Fig. 1b). This mutational survey indicates that BL is pathogenetically distinct from other germinal centre-derived lymphomas.

Highly recurrent mutations in *TCF3* and its negative regulator *ID3* indicated that *TCF3* has a central role in BL pathogenesis, as it does in normal B-cell development by regulating the transcription of immunoglobulin and other B-cell-restricted genes through E-box motifs⁸. *ID3* and/or *TCF3* mutations were present in sporadic BL, HIV-associated BL and endemic BL, in 70%, 67% and 40% of samples, respectively, but these mutations were rare in other lymphoid cancers (Fig. 2a and Supplementary Table 3). In sporadic BL, *ID3* mutations (58%) were more common than *TCF3* mutations (11%), and some tumours had mutations in both genes (13%). *ID3* mutations were usually bi-allelic whereas *TCF3* mutations were often mono-allelic (Supplementary Fig. 2a and Supplementary Table 3). A somatic origin was confirmed for 14 *ID3* mutations and 4 *TCF3* mutations

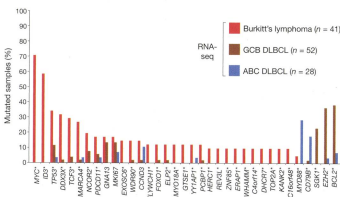


Figure 1 | Recurrently mutated genes in aggressive lymphomas determined by RNA-seq. Shown are genes that were recurrently mutated in BL based on RNA-seq analysis (≥ 4 out of 41 samples), as well as representative genes known to be recurrently mutated in DLBCL. Asterisks indicate differentially mutated genes ($P < 0.05$; Supplementary Table 9).

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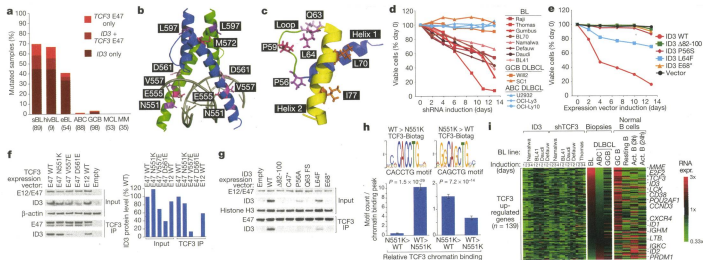


Figure 2 | *TCF3* is essential for Burkitt lymphoma viability. **a**, *TCF3* and *ID3* mutation frequencies in lymphoid cancers. eBL, endemic BL; hivBL, HIV-associated BL; sBL, sporadic BL; MCL, mantle cell lymphoma; MM, multiple myeloma. **b**, Location of BL mutants in the crystal structure of the dimeric *TCF3* B-HLH domain¹⁰. **c**, Location of BL mutants in the crystal structure of the ID3 HLH domain (Protein Data Bank accession number 2LFH). **d**, Selective toxicity of a *TCF3* shRNA for BL lines. Shown is the fraction of GFP⁺, shRNA-expressing cells relative to the GFP⁺, shRNA-negative fraction at the indicated times, normalized to the day 0 values. Data are representative of four experiments. **e**, Toxicity of wild-type (WT) but not mutant *ID3* isoforms for the *ID3*-mutant Namalwa BL line. Shown is the fraction of GFP⁺, *ID3*-expressing cells relative to the GFP⁺, *ID3*-negative cells, normalized to the day 0 values. Data are representative of four experiments. **f**, *TCF3* mutants with reduced ability to bind *ID3*. WT or mutant *TCF3* isoforms were coexpressed with WT *ID3* in 293T cells. The indicated proteins were detected in total cellular extracts (input) or after anti-*TCF3* immunoprecipitation (IP) (left).

(Supplementary Table 3). All *TCF3* mutations affected the basic helix-loop-helix (B-HLH) DNA-binding and dimerization domain of one *TCF3* splice isoform (E47) but not the other (E12), indicating a non-redundant role for E47 in BL pathogenesis. In cases with *TCF3* mutations, E47 was more highly expressed than E12, indicating gain-of-function (Supplementary Fig. 2b).

Most *TCF3* mutations target four evolutionarily conserved residues in the B-HLH region (N551K, V557E/G, D561E/V/N, M572K; Supplementary Fig. 3a). The most common mutations affect V557 and D561, which are adjacent in the crystal structure and face away from DNA, indicating a role in intermolecular interactions (Fig. 2b). The B-HLH domain may be distorted by mutations affecting M572 and L597, which are neighbouring residues in the crystal structure. N551 is a DNA contact residue¹⁰, indicating that N551K could alter *TCF3* DNA binding.

A variety of nonsense and frameshift mutations inactivate *ID3* in BL tumours, suggesting a tumour-suppressor mechanism (Supplementary Fig. 3b). Many missense mutations target the conserved loop region of *ID3*, potentially changing the tertiary structure of the B-HLH domain and impairing its ability to inhibit *TCF3* (ref. 11, Fig. 2c). Numerous *ID3* missense mutations affect the HLH domain away from the interface of the two helices, possibly altering *TCF3* interaction. Other mutations disrupt an *ID3* splice donor and force a cryptic splice donor to be used, thereby deleting residues V82–Q100 (Supplementary Figs 2c and 3b).

An RNA interference screen revealed *TCF3* to be an essential gene in BL lines (Supplementary Fig. 2d and Supplementary Table 4), supporting the notion that the *TCF3* and *ID3* mutations in BL promote *TCF3* action. *TCF3* knockdown caused a time-dependent toxicity in all BL lines, irrespective of *ID3/TCF3* mutations, but had no effect on DLBCL lines (Fig. 2d and Supplementary Figs 2e and 4a, b). Wild-type *TCF3* rescued BL lines from the toxicity of RNA-interference-mediated

ID3 levels were quantified by densitometry and normalized to *TCF3* E47 levels (right). **g**, BL-derived mutant *ID3* proteins are less stable than WT *ID3* and bind *TCF3* less well. Mutant or WT *ID3* isoforms were expressed in the *ID3*-deficient Namalwa BL line. The indicated proteins were detected in total cellular extracts (input) or after anti-*TCF3* IP. **h**, *TCF3*(N551K) is an altered-specificity mutant. Shown on top are DNA base frequencies of the most enriched motifs in peaks bound more than fourfold more or less by *TCF3*(N551K) compared to WT *TCF3*. The mean number ($\pm$ s.e.m.) of the indicated motifs per differentially bound peak is plotted below. **i**, A *TCF3* gene expression signature expressed in BL and normal germinal center B cells. Gene expression changes were profiled in *ID3*-mutant BL lines following *TCF3* knockdown or WT *ID3* overexpression. Shown are genes that were downregulated by at least 0.33 log, in $>70\%$ of samples. Average expression of these genes in the indicated lymphoma subtypes based on published data² and in B-cell subpopulations based on RNA-seq is shown.

depletion of *TCF3*, as did the *TCF3* mutants, indicating that they are not loss-of-function (Supplementary Fig. 2f). Introduction of wild-type *ID3* into BL lines with *ID3* mutations was lethal, but BL-derived *ID3* mutants had less or no toxicity, consistent with a tumour-suppressor mechanism (Fig. 2e and Supplementary Figs 2g and 4c).

The common *ID3* and *TCF3* mutants diminished their inhibitory heterodimerization. *TCF3*(V557E) and *TCF3*(D561E) did not associate well with *ID3* and failed to stabilize *ID3* protein expression, unlike wild-type *TCF3* (Fig. 2f and Supplementary Figs 2h and 4d). Likewise, the *ID3* mutant proteins were expressed less well than wild-type *ID3* and were less able to co-immunoprecipitate *TCF3* (Fig. 2g and Supplementary Fig. 4e). However, *TCF3*(N551K) behaved like wild-type *TCF3* in these dimerization assays, indicating a distinct mechanism.

We next used chromatin immunoprecipitation followed by sequencing (ChIP-seq) analysis to gauge the ability of the *TCF3* mutants to interact with chromatin genome-wide. We engineered two BL lines to express biotinylated wild-type or mutant *TCF3* isoforms (*TCF3*-Biotag; see Methods), allowing us to precipitate bound chromatin with streptavidin. For comparison, we used anti-*TCF3* antibodies to precipitate chromatin in unmanipulated BL cells (Supplementary Table 5). Both the endogenous and *TCF3*-Biotag ChIP-seq peaks were enriched for E-box motifs (CAG(G/C)TG) and overlapped extensively (Supplementary Fig. 5a). In 25-base-pair bins bound by wild-type *TCF3*-Biotag, the V557E, D561E and N551K isoforms had overlapping ChIP-seq tags (>7) in 98%, 98% and 92% of instances, respectively, but the overlap was only 10% for control Biotag ChIP-seq data ($P < 10^{-300}$). Hence, all *TCF3* mutants bound a large number of genomic targets equivalently.

Given the lower overlap between *TCF3*(N551K) and wild-type *TCF3* chromatin binding, we identified genomic regions that had

fourfold greater ($n = 212$) or lesser ($n = 139$) association with wild-type TCF3 than TCF3(N551K) ($P < 10^{-10}$) (Supplementary Table 6 and Supplementary Fig. 5b). In these binding regions, TCF3(V557E) and TCF3(D561E) behaved like wild-type TCF3. The peaks bound preferentially by wild-type TCF3 contained multiple copies of the motif 5'-NNACCTGG-3' whereas the peaks bound preferentially by TCF3(N551K) were enriched for the sequence 5'-GGCAGCTG-3' (Fig. 2b). Whereas both motifs match the E-box consensus, these results indicate that TCF3(N551K) is an altered-specificity mutant that has somewhat different genomic targets than wild-type TCF3.

To gain insight into the biological processes controlled by TCF3 in BL, we profiled changes in gene expression following TCF3 knockdown and following wild-type ID3 expression in ID3-mutant BL lines. We identified 139 'TCF3-upregulated' genes that were decreased in expression by both manipulations and 166 'TCF3-downregulated' genes that were increased in expression (false discovery rate (FDR) = 0.017; Fig. 2i and Supplementary Figs 2i and 6a). TCF3 ChIP-seq peaks were enriched among TCF3-upregulated genes (58%; $P = 1.81 \times 10^{-29}$) and among TCF3-downregulated genes (32%; $P = 1.03 \times 10^{-4}$) (Supplementary Fig. 6a). We will refer to such genes as 'TCF3 direct targets'.

Most TCF3-upregulated genes were more highly expressed in BL than in DLBCL, whereas TCF3-downregulated genes were generally expressed at lower levels in BL ($P \leq 0.001$; Fig. 2i and Supplementary Fig. 6a, b). BL tumours with ID3 and/or TCF3 mutations had higher expression of the TCF3-upregulated signature than tumours with wild-type ID3 and TCF3, and the opposite was true for the TCF3-downregulated signature ($P = 0.0001$; Supplementary Fig. 6c). Hence, the transcriptional influence of TCF3 on the BL phenotype seems to be accentuated by ID3/TCF3 mutations. TCF3-upregulated genes were more highly expressed in germinal centre B cells than in resting or activated blood B cells, and the reverse was true for TCF3-downregulated genes (Fig. 2i and Supplementary Fig. 6a), indicating that BL 'inherits' the TCF3 gene expression program from its normal cellular counterpart.

Biological insights from this analysis include the fact that the negative regulators of TCF3—ID1, ID2 and ID3—were direct targets of TCF3 transactivation, thereby creating a negative feedback loop (Fig. 2i and Supplementary Fig. 5a). By RNA-seq, ID3 was 38-fold and 12-fold more highly expressed in BL than ID1 and ID2, respectively, accounting for the preferential mutation of ID3 in BL. TCF3 also positively regulated genes that have crucial roles in germinal centre B-cell biology (POU2AF1, CXCR4, LTBB, CCND3). TCF3 upregulated CCND3 and E2F2 while downregulating RB1, thereby promoting cell cycle progression.

Two components of the B-cell receptor (BCR), the immunoglobulin heavy and light chains, were both upregulated by TCF3 in BL, as in normal B cells^{8,12} (Fig. 2i and Supplementary Figs 2i, j and 5a). In this regard, it was notable that knockdown of the BCR subunit CD79A was toxic for several BL lines in our RNA interference screen (Supplementary Fig. 7a). Two-thirds of BL lines were clearly BCR-dependent, on the basis of a time-dependent decrease in their viability following knockdown of either CD79A or the BCR-associated kinase SYK (Fig. 3a). Unlike ABC DLBCL lines, which have a 'chronic active' form of BCR signalling⁴, BL lines do not require the NF- κ B pathway for survival because they were not killed by an I κ B kinase β inhibitor and had little or no dependence on CARD11 (ref. 13), an adaptor that engages NF- κ B (Supplementary Fig. 7a–c). Rather, CD79A or SYK depletion in BL lines decreased AKT phosphorylation, a marker of phosphatidylinositol-3-OH (PI(3)) kinase signalling (Fig. 3b and Supplementary Fig. 7d), indicating that the BCR-dependency in BL is akin to 'tonic' BCR signalling¹⁴, a phenomenon that engages pro-survival PI(3) kinase signalling more than NF- κ B¹⁵.

TCF3 knockdown decreased phospho-AKT levels in all BCR-dependent lines tested, as did ID3 overexpression (Fig. 3b and Supplementary Fig. 7d, e), perhaps due to decreased cell-surface BCR expression following TCF3 depletion (Fig. 3c). In addition, a direct TCF3 target, PTPN6, encodes the phosphatase SHP-1, an inhibitor of BCR signalling (Supplementary Figs 2j and 5a). TCF3 depletion increased SHP-1 mRNA and protein levels, indicating

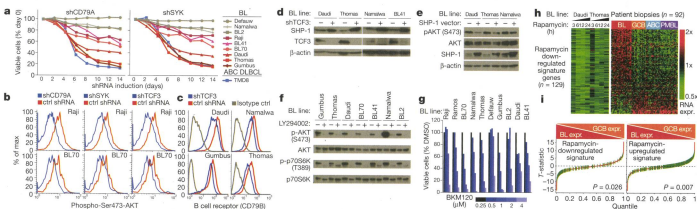


Figure 3 | Tonic BCR signalling and PI(3) kinase activity in Burkitt's lymphoma. a, CD79A and SYK shRNAs are toxic for a subset of BL lines. Shown is the fraction of GFP⁺ cells relative to the GFP⁺ cells at day 0. b, shRNA-negative fraction at the indicated times, normalized to the day 0 values. BCR-dependent BL lines are depicted using red colours. The BCR-dependent ABC DLBCL line TMD8 (ref. 4) is also shown. Data are representative of three experiments. b, Knockdown of CD79A, SYK or TCF3 reduces PI(3) kinase activity. Following induction of the indicated shRNAs for 2 days, shRNA-expressing (GFP⁺) cells were analysed by fluorescence-activated cell sorting (FACS) for phospho-S473-AKT as a measure of PI(3) kinase activity. c, TCF3 regulates surface BCR expression in BL. Following induction of the indicated shRNAs for 1 day, surface BCR expression (CD79B) was quantified by FACS in shRNA-expressing (GFP⁺) cells. d, TCF3 suppresses PTPN6 (SHP-1) expression. A TCF3 shRNA was induced in BL lines for 2 days, followed by immunoblotting for the indicated proteins. e, SHP-1 suppresses phospho-S473-AKT in BL lines. BL lines were transduced with a SHP-1 expression vector

(+) or empty vector (-), whereupon the indicated proteins were analysed by immunoblotting. f, BL lines have constitutively PI(3) kinase activity. The indicated proteins were analysed by immunoblotting, before and after treatment with the PI(3) kinase inhibitor LY294002. g, PI(3) kinase inhibition is toxic to BL lines. Viable BL cells were quantified by MTS assay following treatment for 4 days with the indicated concentrations of the pan-class I PI(3) kinase inhibitor BKM120. h, A signature of rapamycin-responsive genes is highly expressed in BL. Changes of gene expression were profiled over time in 2 BL lines following rapamycin (100 pM) treatment. Genes consistently downregulated in both lines were chosen (see Methods), and their expression in lymphoma biopsies¹⁶ is shown based on the colour scale. PMBL, primary mediastinal B-cell lymphoma. i, The rapamycin-upregulated and -downregulated signatures distinguish BL and GCB DLBCL. Genes are ranked according to their expression in BL versus GCB DLBCL (T-statistic) and rapamycin signature genes are indicated with a green hash mark. Kolmogorov-Smirnov P values are shown.

TCF3 repression (Fig. 3d and Supplementary Figs 2i and 6a). Ectopic provision of SHP-1 decreased phospho-AKT in BCR-dependent BL lines, indicating that TCF3 repression of SHP-1 may contribute to tonic BCR signalling and PI(3) kinase activation in BL (Fig. 3e).

A screen of a larger number of BL lines revealed that all had PI(3) kinase-dependent AKT phosphorylation and engagement of the mTOR pathway, as judged by phosphorylation of p70 S6 kinase (Fig. 3f). Treatment of BL lines with BKM120, a PI(3) kinase inhibitor in clinical trials, or rapamycin, an inhibitor of the mTORC1 complex, was toxic to most BL lines (Fig. 3g and Supplementary Fig. 7f). Of note, both BCR-dependent and -independent lines had constitutive PI(3) kinase signalling. Other mechanisms to activate PI(3) kinase in BL include *PTEN* mutations, which were infrequent (7%), and tenfold overexpression (compared to DLBCL) of the MYC-dependent gene

MIR17HG, which encodes a microRNA that inhibits *PTEN* expression¹⁶ (Supplementary Fig. 7g). To judge whether the PI(3) kinase pathway may be active in primary BL tumours, we identified genes that were significantly up- or downregulated following rapamycin treatment of BL lines (FDR = 0.0022; Supplementary Table 7). Among BL and GCB DLBCL biopsies, rapamycin-downregulated genes were generally more highly expressed in BL ($P = 0.026$), whereas rapamycin-upregulated genes had the opposite enrichment pattern ($P = 0.007$) (Fig. 3i), indicating that PI(3) kinase-dependent mTORC1 activity is a consistent feature of BL tumours.

Another aspect of BL pathogenesis was revealed by recurrent mutations in the TCF3 direct target *CCND3*, encoding cyclin D3, a required regulator of the G1–S cell cycle transition in germinal centre B cells^{17,18}. *CCND3* mutations were frequent in sporadic BL (38%) and HIV-associated BL (67%) but not endemic BL (1.8%), indicating a distinct genetic pathogenesis for this latter BL subtype (Fig. 4b). At a lower frequency, *CCND3* mutations were also present in ABC and GCB DLBCL^{3,6,7}. Multiple nonsense and frameshift mutations removed up to 41 amino acids from the cyclin D3 C terminus (Fig. 4a and Supplementary Table 8). Recurrent missense mutations affected threonine 283 (T283), known to be involved in D-type cyclin phosphorylation and stability¹⁹, as well as nearby proline (P284) and isoleucine (I290) residues. These cyclin D3 residues were conserved in evolution, and similar residues are present in cyclin D1 and D2 (Fig. 4a). Most mutations were heterozygous and their somatic origin was confirmed in five cases (Supplementary Table 8).

To explore the function of the cyclin D3 mutants, we constructed fusion proteins linking green fluorescent protein (GFP) to either wild-type or mutant cyclin D3. All mutant isoforms accumulated to more than tenfold higher levels than the wild-type isoform (Fig. 4c), and pulse-chase analysis showed that the mutant cyclin D3 isoforms have longer half-lives (Supplementary Fig. 8a). To test the oncogenic potential of the cyclin D3 mutants, we transduced GFP-tagged wild-type or T283A cyclin D3 into lymphoma lines in which endogenous cyclin D3 was knocked down. Cells transduced with T283A cyclin D3 had a marked proliferative advantage over untransduced cells, but wild-type cyclin D3 had little effect (Fig. 4d). Separately, our RNA interference screen revealed that BL and GCB DLBCL lines depend on cyclin D3 and CDK6, a kinase that partners with D-type cyclins, irrespective of

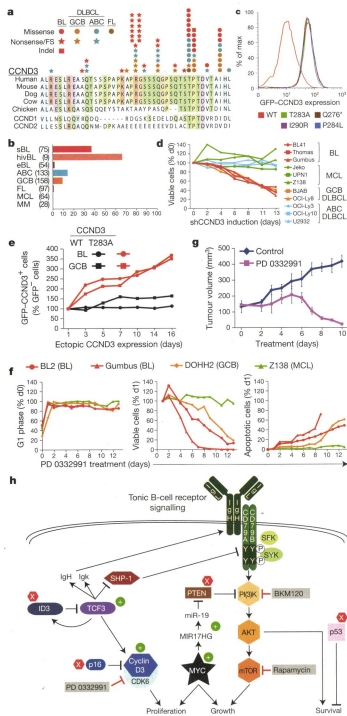


Figure 4 | Oncogenic *CCND3* mutations in Burkitt's lymphoma. **a**, Cyclin D3 residues affected by the indicated mutations in each lymphoma subtype. Amino acids 250–292 of NP_001751 are shown. FL, follicular lymphoma; FS, frameshift. **b**, Frequencies of *CCND3* mutations in different lymphoma subtypes. **c**, *CCND3* mutations increase protein stability. FACS analysis of the Gumbus BL line transduced with WT or mutant GFP-*CCND3* fusion proteins. **d**, The T283A cyclin D3 mutant confers a proliferation advantage. Expression of endogenous *CCND3* was knocked down in Gumbus (BL) and BJAB (GCB DLBCL) cells and different GFP-*CCND3* isoforms were ectopically expressed. The relative number of GFP-*CCND3*-expressing cells is plotted over time of shRNA and GFP-*CCND3* induction, normalized to day 0. Data are representative of three experiments. **e**, *CCND3* D3 shRNAs are selectively toxic for BL and GCB DLBCL lines. Shown is the fraction of GFP⁺, shRNA-expressing cells relative to the GFP⁺, shRNA-negative fraction at the indicated times, normalized to the day 0 values. Data are representative of four experiments. **f**, Cell cycle block in G1 phase is lethal to cyclin D3-mutant lymphoma lines. Lines were treated with the CDK4/6 inhibitor PD 0332991 (1 μ M) over the indicated time course and analysed for viable cells in G1 phase, total viable cells and apoptotic cells. Data were normalized as indicated and are representative of three experiments. **g**, Therapeutic potential of PD 0332991 revealed using a BL xenograft model. Immunodeficient mice bearing established subcutaneous xenografts of the Gumbus BL line (engineered to express luciferase) were treated with PD 0332991 (150 mg per kg per day per po) for the indicated times. Tumour volumes were estimated by luciferase luminescence. Error bars are s.e.m. ($n = 3$). **h**, Schematic of recurrent oncogenic pathways in Burkitt's lymphoma. Gain-of-function and loss-of-function aberrations are indicated by + signs and by × signs, respectively. Grey boxes indicate drugs that block these deregulated pathways.

CCND3 mutational status (Fig. 4e, Supplementary Fig. 8b–d and Supplementary Table 4). Hence, BL lines rely on cyclin D3/CDK6 for cell cycle progression, an effect augmented by oncogenic cyclin D3 mutations. The BL cell cycle is also deregulated by nonsense and frameshift mutations or homozygous deletions in *CDKN2A*, encoding the CDK6 inhibitor p16 (Supplementary Fig. 8e and Supplementary Table 8).

To explore this pathway as a therapeutic target, we treated BL, GCB DLBCL and mantle cell lymphoma (MCL) lines with a CDK4/6 inhibitor (PD0332991) daily for 2 weeks. After an arrest in G1 phase, the BL and GCB DLBCL lines began to die by day 2, with a steady accumulation of apoptotic cells over time, whereas the MCL line arrested in G1 phase but did not die (Fig. 4f). Treatment of a BL xenograft model after the establishment of tumours with PD0332991 profoundly reduced tumour volume after 6 days, resulting in the virtual disappearance of tumour cells by day 10 (Fig. 4g and Supplementary Fig. 8f).

By merging functional and structural genomic data we have uncovered previously unappreciated pathways in BL pathogenesis, several of which are amenable to therapeutic attack (Fig. 4h). The majority of BL tumours acquire mutations that free TCF3 from ID3 inhibition. These mutations 'hard-wire' a TCF3 transcriptional program that is characteristic of germinal center B cells and distinguishes BL from other aggressive lymphomas. BL lines require TCF3 for survival, in part because it augments pro-survival PI(3) kinase signalling by intensifying a tonic form of BCR signalling. The oncogenic synergy between the MYC and PI(3) kinase pathways that is suggested by our study is supported by the generation of BL-like tumours in mice in which these two pathways are deregulated²⁰. Additionally, the key role of cyclin D3/CDK6 in BL pathogenesis is reinforced by the identification of cyclin D3 mutants in this mouse model.

Whereas high-dose chemotherapy can often cure BL in younger patients from developed countries¹, these regimens are unsafe in older patients and cannot be deployed in less developed regions due to immune suppression and to logistical difficulties that preclude effective delivery²¹. Hopefully, the new insights into BL pathogenesis described herein will prompt clinical evaluation of drugs targeting the PI(3) kinase pathway, tonic BCR signalling, and cyclin D3/CDK6 in BL. Eventually, the rational combination of such targeted agents could provide more effective and less-toxic treatment of BL worldwide.

METHODS SUMMARY

RNA-Seq was performed using established Illumina protocols on a HiSeq 2000 sequencer. RNA interference screening and cellular toxicity assays were conducted as described¹³. Gene expression profiling was performed using Agilent 4 × 44K microarrays. Detailed experimental and analytic procedures are presented in Supplementary Methods.

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Author Information Gene expression profiling data have been submitted to GEO under accession number GSE35163. RNA-seq data has been deposited in NCBI Sequence Read Archive (SRA048058) and ChIP-seq data has been deposited in NCBI Sequence Read Archive (SRA052618). Reprints and permissions information is available at www.nature.com/reprints. The authors declare no competing financial interests. Readers are welcome to comment on the online version of the paper. Correspondence and requests for materials should be addressed to L.M.S. (lstaudt@mail.nih.gov).

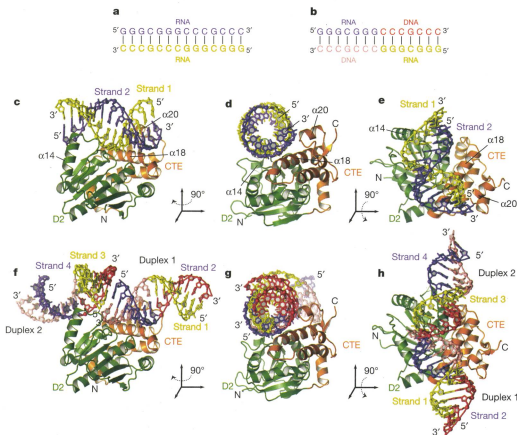


Figure 2 | Crystal structures of Mss116p D2 bound to A-form duplexes.

a, The 14-bp self-complementary GC-rich RNA duplex substrate. **b**, The 14-bp GC-rich chimeric RNA-DNA duplex substrate. **c–e**, Orthogonal views of the D2–dsRNA complex coloured as in **a** and Fig. 1a. Helix $\alpha 14$ of D2, which

3.2 Å resolution, the first structure of a DEAD-box helicase domain bound to a duplex substrate (Fig. 2c–e, Supplementary Fig. 3 and Supplementary Table 1). The crystallographic asymmetric unit contains four very similar complexes with protein molecules bound on either side of a pseudo-continuous RNA duplex (Supplementary Fig. 3a). The structure of a single complex shows that D2 contains a positively charged binding pocket for an RNA duplex of A-form geometry (Fig. 2c–e and Supplementary Fig. 3b). One duplex strand (strand 1) interacts extensively with D2 (Fig. 3a, b and Supplementary Table 2). These interactions include multiple contacts to the phosphate groups of the three centrally bound nucleotide residues (N4–N6) by DEAD-box motifs IV, IVa, V, and a loop containing motif Va. The second strand (strand 2) makes only a few contacts, which include hydrogen bonds between 2'-OH groups and the CTE (Fig. 3a, c and Supplementary Table 2). No protein contacts are observed to the RNA bases of either strand (Fig. 3), consistent with the non-specific RNA binding shown by Mss116p and other DEAD-box proteins¹. Except for the contact by motif Va, the structure of D2 and its contacts to the phosphate backbone of strand 1 are the same as in the closed-state structure of Mss116p, in which D2 additionally interacts with D1 and adenosine nucleotide (Fig. 3a and Supplementary Fig. 4; root mean squared deviation = 0.46 Å)¹⁰. Given the similar binding affinities observed for dsRNA by isolated D2 and the full helicase core (Fig. 1c and Supplementary Fig. 2), we propose that the D2–dsRNA structure provides a model for the initial complex of Mss116p with duplex RNA in the open state of the enzyme and a structural basis for dsRNA recognition by Mss116p.

We also determined a structure of D2 in complex with an equivalent 14-bp chimeric RNA–DNA duplex (Fig. 2b) at 3.6 Å resolution, in which each molecule of protein interacts with two A-form duplex

contains motif IVa, faces the major groove of the dsRNA, and $\alpha 18$ and $\alpha 20$ of the CTE face the minor groove of the dsRNA. **f–h**, Orthogonal views of the D2–dsRNA–DNA complex, coloured as in **b** and Fig. 1a, in which D2 is bound to two stacked 14-bp chimeric RNA–DNA duplexes.

substrates (Fig. 2f–h, Supplementary Fig. 5 and Supplementary Table 1). These chimeric duplexes make almost identical contacts with D2 as dsRNA (Supplementary Fig. 5b). Surprisingly, however, a DNA segment of strand 1 interacts with the DEAD-box motifs in the main 'RNA'-binding tract of D2, while an RNA segment binds to the CTE (Fig. 2f–h and Supplementary Fig. 5). This orientation is probably favoured because D2 interacts primarily with nucleic acid substrate phosphate groups, whereas the non-conserved CTE makes hydrogen-bond contacts with the 2'-OHs of RNA (see earlier). The finding that A-form DNA and RNA interact in a similar manner in the conserved RNA-binding tract of D2 suggests that the substrate specificity of DEAD-box proteins for RNA duplexes is dictated primarily by phosphate backbone geometry. Consistent with this idea, modelling demonstrates that the binding pocket of D2 is not shaped to recognize a B-form DNA duplex, the predominant conformation of dsDNA (Supplementary Fig. 6). Additionally, a genetic assay that is stringently dependent upon Mss116p function indicates that the side chains of conserved residues of D2 that interact with phosphate groups (R415, motif IVa; and T433, motif V) are critical for Mss116p function *in vivo*⁹, whereas the side chains of residues in the CTE that interact with 2'-OH groups of the RNA (S535, R538) can be mutated without detectable loss of function (Supplementary Fig. 7). Nucleic acid recognition based on duplex geometry may explain why DEAD-box proteins can unwind chimeric RNA–DNA duplexes with as few as two centrally located ribonucleotides⁸, as structural studies indicate that chimeric duplexes with only one ribonucleotide can adopt A-form geometry^{16,17}.

Our D2 structures provide insight into several other DEAD-box protein activities. DEAD-box proteins function on a wide variety of RNA substrates¹². A comparison of the D2–dsRNA and D2–dsRNA–DNA structures, and different complexes within their asymmetric

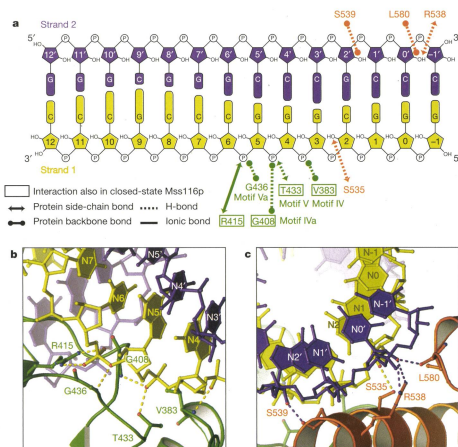


Figure 3 | Interactions between Mss116p D2 and duplex RNA. **a**, Schematic of RNA-protein interactions observed in the D2-dsRNA structure. The dsRNA interacts with conserved DEAD-box motifs IV–Va of D2 (green) and the CTE of D2 (orange). Boxes indicate that the interaction is maintained in closed-state Mss116p¹⁹. RNA bases are numbered according to their position

units, shows that the binding orientation of the distal regions of duplex substrates can vary, while the contacts between the conserved motifs and centrally bound nucleotide residues are maintained (Supplementary Fig. 8). Although these differences in substrate binding orientation could be influenced by crystal packing, the observed flexibility in nucleic-acid binding away from the basic binding tract of D2 may be advantageous for the loading and unwinding of diverse physiological RNA substrates, such as group I and group II introns, and could contribute towards the general RNA-chaperone activity of Mss116p^{5,6}. The presence of a dsRNA-binding pocket in D2 also raises the possibility that this domain could have a role in strand annealing in the absence of ATP, an activity observed for Mss116p and other DEAD-box proteins¹, by orienting two ssRNAs in a position to pair in the duplex-binding pocket. The additional RNA interactions with the CTE of Mss116p may explain the relatively high strand annealing activity of Mss116p compared to other DEAD-box proteins¹⁹.

Collectively, our results indicate that RNA unwinding by Mss116p begins with the helicase core domains functioning independently to bind ATP and RNA substrates (Fig. 4a). This previously unobserved mechanism for substrate recognition by a helicase is consistent with the wide separation of the two core domains (~50 Å for their centres of mass) in the solution structure of the open state¹¹. Subsequent interactions of the exposed regions of these substrates with the remainder of their binding sites in the opposite domain would result in cooperative tight binding coupled to core closure, RNA-strand separation, and formation of the ATPase active site (Fig. 4a). Notably, the loop in D2 that contains part of motif Va and interacts with duplex RNA in the D2-dsRNA structure (see earlier) shifts markedly upon formation

relative to ssRNA in closed-state Mss116p (see Supplementary Fig. 4d). Similar nucleic-acid-protein interactions were observed in the D2-dsRNA-DNA structure (Supplementary Fig. 5). H-bond, hydrogen bond. **b**, Interactions between strand I (yellow) of the duplex RNA and D2 (green). **c**, Interactions between duplex RNA and the CTE of D2 (orange).

of the closed state and helps form the ATPase active site (Fig. 4b). This conformational change may be part of a switch that triggers ATP hydrolysis upon core closure. After ATP hydrolysis, dissociation of P_i and ADP cause reopening of the core, release of the bound strand, and regeneration of the enzyme^{6,19}.

Comparison of the D2-dsRNA structure to the previously reported closed-state structure of the helicase core of Mss116p bound to adenosine nucleotide and ssRNA (Fig. 4c) indicates that D2 functions as a stationary platform that positions dsRNA for unwinding by the incursion of D1 (Fig. 4d, e and Supplementary Fig. 9). In the closed state of Mss116p, RNA-binding motifs Ia, Ib, Ic, and the post-II region of D1 are sterically incompatible with dsRNA bound in the duplex-binding site of D2 (Fig. 4d). This suggests that D1 promotes RNA unwinding in two ways (Fig. 4e and Supplementary Fig. 9). First, the conserved post-II region of D1 interrupts the centrally bound base pairs of the RNA duplex to displace strand 2. This displacement is presumably facilitated by the minimal interaction of strand 2 with the protein and could occur actively or during 'breathing' of the duplex²⁰. Second, core closure introduces two bends in strand 1, one by interactions with the conserved 'wedge helix' in D1 (motif Ic) and the other by interactions with the CTE¹⁹. DEAD-box proteins that unwind RNA but lack the CTE introduce only the first bend using the same conserved D1 wedge helix¹³. On core closure, the buried solvent accessible surface area of strand 1 increases owing to additional interactions with D1 (1,256 Å² compared to 544 Å² in the D2-dsRNA structure; Supplementary Table 2), contributing to the driving force for RNA unwinding. Further, the two bends induced in strand 1 (Supplementary Fig. 9b) impede its re-annealing to strand 2.

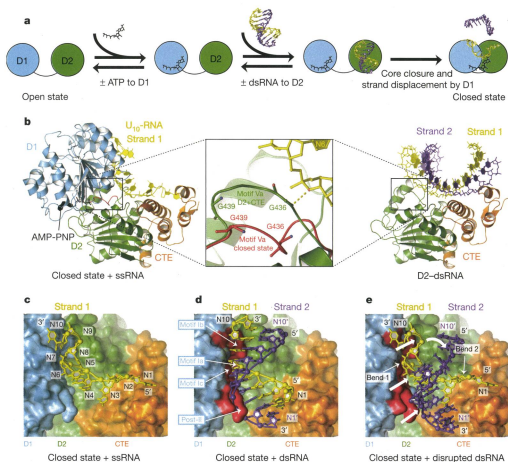


Figure 4 | RNA-duplex binding and unwinding by Mss116p. **a**, Model for the modular roles of the helicase core domains of Mss116p during RNA recognition and unwinding. Although ATP and duplex RNA could bind in either order, the binding of ATP to D1 is shown as a first step because Mss116p-ATP complexes are probably pre-populated at physiological concentrations of ATP (>1 mM)³⁰. **b**, Comparison of the position and interactions of the flexible motif Va loop (residues 435–440) in the D2-dsRNA and closed-state structures of Mss116p. The closed-state helicase core of Mss116p (PDB accession 3IXX)¹⁰ bound to ssRNA (U₁₀-RNA; yellow) and adenosine nucleotide (AMP-PNP; black) is shown with domains coloured as in

Fig. 1a. In the D2-dsRNA structure, the motif Va loop (green) interacts with strand 1 of dsRNA (yellow), whereas in the closed-state structure, the loop (red) shifts to a different position where motif Va helps to form the ATP-binding site. **c**, Surface representation of closed-state Mss116p with N1–N10 of U₁₀-RNA (yellow) indicated. **d**, Surface representation of closed-state Mss116p with dsRNA modelled in the duplex-RNA-binding pocket of D2. Sterically incompatible regions of D1 are highlighted in red. **e**, Change in trajectory of strand 1 and predicted displacement of strand 2 of dsRNA by D1 upon core closure of Mss116p with arrows indicating regions of the substrate that are displaced.

Additional conformational changes that occur upon ATP hydrolysis, dissociation of P_i, and/or reopening of the core may also contribute to RNA unwinding.

The model we propose here for RNA-duplex recognition and unwinding by Mss116p explains the previously reported requirement for ATP binding, but not hydrolysis, for RNA unwinding by DEAD-box proteins^{21,22}. This is because substrate binding drives core closure and strand separation (Fig. 4a), whereas ATP hydrolysis to regenerate the enzyme cannot occur until formation of the ATPase active site in the closed-state core. The model also elucidates why RNA unwinding by DEAD-box proteins is non-processive and can initiate directly from a double-stranded region of a substrate^{1,2}, as RNA duplexes are bound directly by D2. Additionally, the differences in RNA-unwinding activity observed for different ATP analogues²¹ could reflect differences in their binding affinity for the closed state.

Because the RNA-unwinding mechanism described here for Mss116p depends primarily upon conserved DEAD-box protein structures and motifs with only an ancillary role for the CTE, we propose that its major features are used by all DEAD-box proteins. All DEAD-box proteins rely on their helicase core for RNA unwinding and use appended domains for auxiliary functions, such as interactions with partner proteins or to target the helicase core to specific RNA substrates¹. Structural studies of other DEAD-box proteins show that

D1 can by itself bind adenosine nucleotide in a binding pocket formed by the Q-motif, which recognizes the adenine base, motif I (the phosphate-binding or P-loop) and motif II^{14,15}. By contrast, structures of Mss116p and other DEAD-box proteins in the closed state show that D2 interacts minimally with the adenine base^{1,10,13}, in agreement with our observation that D2 does not by itself bind specifically to ATP (Fig. 1b and Supplementary Fig. 1). Likewise, all DEAD-box proteins contain a conserved RNA-binding track in D2 that contains motifs IV, IVa and V¹, and could recognize dsRNA similarly to Mss116p. By contrast, dsRNA is sterically incompatible with the motif Ic wedge helix and the post-II region in the RNA-binding track of D1 of other DEAD-box proteins^{10,13,23}, in agreement with our finding that D1 of Mss116p cannot by itself bind an RNA duplex (Fig. 1c and Supplementary Fig. 2). The post-II region, which displaces strand 2 of a bound duplex in the unwinding mechanism proposed for Mss116p (Fig. 4d, e), is conserved and positioned to have the same role in other DEAD-box proteins^{9,23}, as is motif Va^{1,15,24}, which forms part of loop that contributes to initial binding of the duplex RNA and rearranges to help form the ATPase active site in the closed state (Fig. 4b).

Non-ring-forming helicases with structurally conserved cores of RecA-like domains D1 and D2 are classified into two superfamilies (SFs), SF1 and SF2, with DEAD-box proteins comprising the largest family of SF2 (refs 24, 25). These helicases are thought to have evolved

from a common ancestor²⁶, but have diverged to possess a variety of accessory domains, to have different specificities for RNA or DNA substrates, and to operate by distinct mechanisms^{24,25}. These include processive and non-processive duplex unwinding and translocation without unwinding. The modular substrate-binding functions of D1 and D2, duplex binding by D2, and substrate specificity based on nucleic acid geometry found here for Mss116p may be features that underlie these diverse mechanisms. Interestingly, two recent crystal structures of the closed state of the pathogen recognition receptor RIG-I (also known as DDX58), an SF2 helicase closely related to DEAD-box proteins, show dsRNA bound in the RNA-binding track of D2 of RIG-I in the same orientation as D2 of Mss116p and interacting with conserved SF2 helicase RNA-binding motifs including IV, IVa and V (Supplementary Fig. 10a, c)^{27,28}. However, the orientation of D1 in the RIG-I complex differs from that of Mss116p in the closed state (Supplementary Fig. 10b), enabling RIG-I to bind and translocate on a duplex substrate without RNA unwinding^{27,28}. RIG-I also contains ancillary domains that contribute to dsRNA binding and may influence substrate orientation to favour duplex binding over unwinding^{27,29}. Other SF1 and SF2 helicases could have evolved similarly to promote different closed-state conformations of their helicase cores that give rise to distinct mechanisms of action.

METHODS SUMMARY

The helicase core of Mss116p (D1D2; residues 88–597), D1 (residues 88–330) and D2 (residues 342–597) were expressed and purified as described for full-length Mss116p^{16,11}. Substrate-binding assays were performed in a buffer of 20 mM Tris-HCl (pH 7.5), 100 mM KCl, 10% glycerol, 1 mM dithiothreitol, 5 mM MgCl₂. ATP binding was measured by incubating proteins with ATP at 22 °C followed by gel-filtration chromatography at 4 °C with increasing concentrations of ATP to measure the A_{500nm} and A_{280nm} of the eluted protein. For ATP-agarose assays, proteins were incubated with ATP-agarose at 4 °C for 24 h, and binding was assessed by SDS-PAGE of the ATP-agarose pellet. Fluorescence anisotropy and EMSA measurements were performed using a 3' fluorescein (FAM)-labelled 14-bp self-complementary dsRNA (5'-GGGCGGGCCGCC-FAM-3') annealed by slow cooling after heating to 94 °C for 1 min. Crystals of D2-dsRNA that contain an unlabelled version of the dsRNA substrate used in the binding assays were obtained in 8% tacsimate (pH 6.0; Hampton Research), 20% (w/v) PEG 3350 by hanging drop. Crystals diffracted to 3.2 Å and belong to space group $P2_12_12_1$ with a unit cell of $a = 160.5$ Å, $b = 88.4$ Å and $c = 121.2$ Å. The final solution has an R_{work} and R_{free} of 22.4% and 26.8%, respectively. Crystals of D2-dsRNA-DNA that contain a 14-bp self-complementary chimeric substrate (5'-GrGrGrGrGrGdCdCdCdCdCdCdC) were obtained in 6% tacsimate (pH 5.0; Hampton Research), 20% (w/v) PEG 3350 by hanging drop. Crystals diffracted to 3.6 Å and belong to space group $P2_12_12_1$ with a unit cell of $a = 43.7$ Å, $b = 70.1$ Å and $c = 214.9$ Å. The final solution has an R_{work} and R_{free} of 24.4% and 28.0%, respectively.

Full Methods and any associated references are available in the online version of the paper.

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Author Contributions This study was designed by A.L.M. and A.M.L. A.L.M. cloned the individual domain constructs, purified proteins, crystallized the complexes, collected X-ray crystallographic data, and performed binding assays. A.L.M., M.D.C. and D.J.S. processed and refined the X-ray diffraction data. B.G. performed genetic assays. All authors contributed to analysing the results. A.L.M., M.D.C. and A.M.L. wrote the paper, with contributions from D.J.S. and B.G.

Author Information Coordinates and structure factors were deposited in the Protein Data Bank under accession numbers 4DB2 (D2-dsRNA) and 4DB4 (D2-dsRNA-DNA). Reprints and permissions information is available at www.nature.com/reprints. The authors declare no competing financial interests. Readers are welcome to comment on the online version of the paper. Correspondence and requests for materials should be addressed to A.L.M. (lambowitz@atx.utexas.edu).

Alternating-access mechanism in conformationally asymmetric trimers of the betaine transporter BetP

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Betaine and Na⁺ symport has been extensively studied in the osmotically regulated transporter BetP from *Corynebacterium glutamicum*, a member of the betaine/choline/carnitine transporter family, which shares the conserved LeuT-like fold of two inverted structural repeats¹. BetP adjusts its transport activity by sensing the cytoplasmic K⁺ concentration as a measure for hyperosmotic stress via the osmosensing carboxy-terminal domain^{2,3}. BetP needs to be in a trimeric state for communication between individual protomers through several intratrimeric interaction sites⁴. Recently, crystal structures of inward-facing BetP trimers have contributed to our understanding of activity regulation on a molecular level^{5,6}. Here we report new crystal structures, which reveal two conformationally asymmetric BetP trimers⁷, capturing among them three distinct transport states. We observe a total of four new conformations at once: an outward-open apo and an outward-occluded apo state, and two closed transition states—one in complex with betaine and one substrate-free. On the basis of these new structures, we identified local and global conformational changes in BetP that underlie the molecular transport mechanism, which partially resemble structural changes observed in other sodium-coupled LeuT-like fold transporters, but show differences we attribute to the osmolytic nature of betaine, the exclusive substrate specificity and the regulatory properties of BetP.

Crystals of a surface-engineered, fully functional BetP mutant (BetP(AN29/E44E45E46/AAA))³ were grown in the presence of betaine, diffracting to a resolution of 3.1 Å. Exchange of Gly 153 against aspartate in the unfolded stretch of transmembrane helix 1 (TMH1)¹ in the same mutant (Supplementary Fig. 1) resulted in a sixfold increased affinity for sodium and additional specificity for choline⁶ (Supplementary Fig. 2). Note that the numbering of the BetP TMHs was adapted to the LeuT numbering for better comparison⁸. Therefore, TMH1'–TMH10' correspond to TMH3–TMH12, whereas TMH1' and TMH2 are now designated as TMH1(–2) and TMH1(–1), respectively. BetP(G153D) was co-crystallized with choline and crystals diffracted to a resolution of 3.25 Å. The structures revealed BetP trimers that lack a non-crystallographic three-fold symmetry (Fig. 1, Supplementary Fig. 3a and Supplementary Table 1). That is, each protomer within one trimer adopts a different conformation of the alternating-access cycle (Supplementary Fig. 3b): a substrate-free outward-occluded (C_{occ}), a substrate-free outward-open (C_o), a closed substrate-free (C_c), a closed substrate-bound (C_s), an inward-open (C_s) betaine-bound and an inward-open choline-bound (Fig. 1). The closed states reported here for the first time—to our knowledge—for a LeuT-like fold transporter are an intermediate between outward- and inward-facing states (Supplementary Fig. 3b). C_s is characterized by a central binding site (S1) site that is closed by nearly 14 Å of protein bulk from either side of the membrane. The trimethylammonium group of betaine in the S1 site forms cation–π interactions with Trp 373, Trp 374 and Trp 377, which are arranged in a tryptophan prism (Fig. 1, inset). These residues are

located entirely in TMH6' and comprise the signature motif of the betaine/choline/carnitine transporter (BCCT) family¹. We also identified a positive peak in the F_o – F_c difference electron density map in the C_s state localized at the structurally conserved Na2 site (Khafizov *et al.*, manuscript in preparation). Sodium is coordinated in the Na2 site by carbonyls from the backbone of residues Ala 147 and Met 150 from TMH1' and Phe 464 as well as by the hydroxyl groups of residues Thr 467 and Ser 468 in TMH8' (Fig. 1, inset). The betaine location observed in the S1 site is different from that in C_s (Fig. 1, inset) or the published inward-occluded state (C_{occ}S)³ (Supplementary Fig. 4). In the C_{occ}S state, Trp 374 in TMH6' and Trp 194 and Tyr 197 in TMH2'

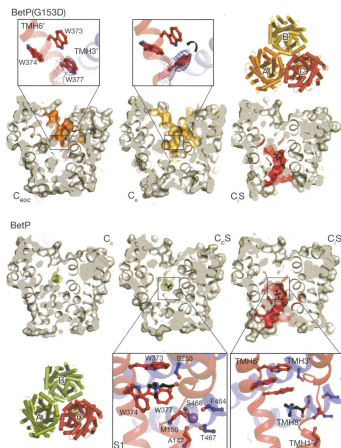


Figure 1 | Conformational states and substrate-binding sites observed in BetP and BetP(G153D) asymmetric trimers. BetP(G153D) (PDB accession 4DOJ): chain A, C_{occ}; chain B, C_o; chain C, C_s. BetP (PDB accession 4AIN): chain A, C_o; chain B, C_s; chain C, C_s. Betaine (4AIN) and choline (4DOJ) are shown in blue, red and black; sodium is shown in purple. S1 is the central betaine-binding site. The 2F_o – F_c map of Trp 377 in the C_o and C_{occ} states is presented at the 1.4σ level.

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coordinate betaine⁸, whereas in C₆S, betaine has shifted towards the cytoplasm so that it solely interacts with Trp 377 in TMH6' and backbone carbonyls from TMH1'.

Rotamer states of Trp 374 and Trp 377 change during state transitions, whereas Trp 373 remains in the same plane although with different inclinations of the indole group. Both Trp 374 and Trp 377 rotate by nearly 90°. It is important to note that the binding site in the C₆S and C₆SS states does not form optimal interactions with the substrate; that is, betaine 'fits' perfectly in the S1 site only in the transient C₆S state. Consequently, the binding energy is exploited fully only in that transition state. Trp 374 has a dominant role and any exchange against another residue renders BetP inactive⁸, whereas substitution of Trp 373 or Trp 374 decreases affinity (Supplementary Fig. 5a, b). Side-chain rotations were also observed for several aromatic residues in TMH1' and TMH6' (Phe 156, Phe 369, Phe 380 and Phe 384), which are highly conserved in the BCCT family (Supplementary Fig. 5c). Alanine substitution of any periplasmic occluding residue (Supplementary Fig. 5a, b and Supplementary Table 2) decreases affinity for betaine, whereas mutation of aromatic residues in the cytoplasmic pathway (Supplementary Fig. 5d, e and Supplementary Table 2) did not have a major effect on affinity, suggesting that only the periplasmic aromatic residues directly or indirectly contribute to betaine recruitment. Consequently, betaine is preferably transported from outside to inside. The transition from inward to outward also occurs via a closed, albeit substrate-free C₆ state. The closed states C₆ and C₆S are very similar to one another (root mean squared deviation 1.0 Å) and the tryptophan prism remains nearly unchanged (Supplementary Fig. 6). As this conformational change occurs in the absence of substrate, a relatively flat free energy landscape might be required to allow BetP to cycle back to an outward-facing state, which is also presented here for the first time for a BCCT. Both outward-facing states are occluded from the cytoplasmic side by ~16 Å of protein bulk (Fig. 1). In the C₆ state, a periplasmic funnel extends to the Na₂ site (Supplementary Fig. 7a). In the C₆SS state, the periplasmic funnel is less deep and the Na₂ site is not

accessible, mainly due to the rotation of Trp 377 by nearly 90° (Fig. 1, inset, and Supplementary Fig. 7a). The aromatic side chains described above form the floor in both outward-facing conformations, akin to the outward-open state of the arginine/arginine antiporter AdiC⁹. C₆SS and C₆ states show a very similar main-chain conformation, although a 2.0 Å displacement of the periplasmic half of TMH10' facilitates opening of the external cavity (Supplementary Fig. 7b). The transition from the occluded to the open state might occur in BetP in the absence of substrate by stochastic thermodynamic fluctuations, after which sodium binding might trigger the full opening of the transporter to the periplasmic side to allow subsequent binding of betaine.

On the basis of the three major conformations—outward-facing, closed and inward-facing—the alternating-access mechanism in BetP can be described as a hybrid of rigid body movements (Fig. 2) and individual flexing of symmetry-related helices (Figs 2 and 3). The rigid body movement involves the scaffold motif (TMH3' and TMH4' in repeat 1 and TMH8' and TMH9' in repeat 2) tilting about 13° away from an axis running through the centre of BetP normal to the plane of the membrane, relative to the 4-TMH bundle. Similar rigid body rotation has been observed for LeuT¹⁰ and Mhp1¹⁰, for which the scaffolds tilt by ~10° and ~18°, respectively. However, compared to the tilting of the bundle domain observed for Mhp1¹⁰ and LeuT¹⁰ this movement is less pronounced in BetP (Supplementary Fig. 8). Recently, we reported two regulatory ionic interaction networks in BetP that are involved in a crosstalk between individual protomers within the trimer¹¹. These networks link bundle helices together, restricting their flexibility, a unique feature only observed for the osmoregulated BetP. We suggest that the restricted opening of BetP is related to its exclusive specificity for betaine, whereas other betaine BCCTs of the OpuD type show low affinity for other osmolytes, for example, proline¹². Betaine is a rather small molecule that acts as an osmolyte and protein stabilizer, promoting folding by forcing proteins to decrease its exposure to solvent by markedly decreasing the water activity¹³. Betaine is excluded from the first hydration shell of the protein backbone; however, in

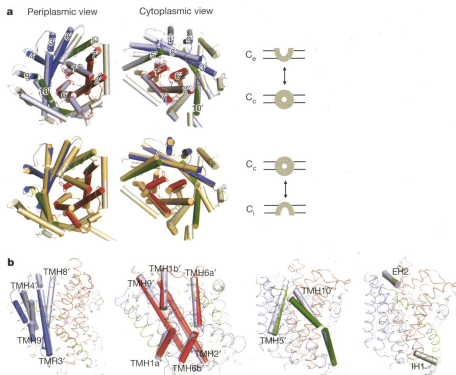


Figure 2 | Conformational changes during the alternating-access cycle.

a, Periplasmic and cytoplasmic views of conformational changes during the transition from the C₆ (bundle domain in red (TMHs 1', 2', 6' and 7')), hash motif in blue (TMHs 3', 4', 8' and 9') and thin gates in green (TMHs 5' and

10'); see Supplementary Fig. 1) to the C₆ state (light yellow), from the C₆ to the C₆S state (light blue), and from the C₆ to the C₁ state (light blue). **b**, Superpositions of the C₆ (coloured as in Supplementary Fig. 1) and C₆S state (light blue) showing in cylinders the scaffold domain, the bundle domain, the 'thin' gates and the extra helical segments, respectively.

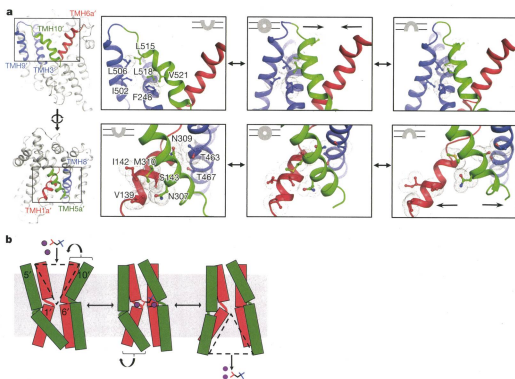


Figure 3 | Opening and closing of the periplasmic and cytoplasmic gates in BetP. **a**, Sequence of opening and closing of gating main chains on both sides of the membrane. From left to right, C_o , C_e and C_i states. **b**, Model of alternating-access 'gating' mechanism in BetP. From left to right, schematic drawings of the C_o , C_e and C_i states. Betaine is shown in black, blue and red, sodium ions in

purple. Arrows indicate the closing of the periplasmic gates TMH6a' and TMH10' after substrate and ions bind to the C_o state, and the opening of the cytoplasmic gates TMH1a' and TMH5' to allow the release of substrate and ions from the C_e state. TMHs are coloured as in Fig. 2 and Supplementary Fig. 1.

transporters interactions with substrates in the micromolar affinity range have to take place¹. From this point of view a fully hydrated substrate pathway owing to a wide opening might be disadvantageous for the stability of BetP and efficient betaine import.

To open the pathways adequately, BetP additionally requires a gating mechanism, observed by the movement of individual helical parts that are not restricted by the regulatory networks (Figs 2 and 3). Similar to what was described recently for LeuT⁷, TMH1a' is displaced considerably to open the cytoplasmic gate. Independently, the symmetry-related TMH6a' contributes to open the periplasmic gate, although with a less pronounced movement. During transition from the outward to inward state, TMH1a' is displaced by ~5 Å and tilted by 18°. In LeuT TMH1a is displaced by ~12 Å and tilted by ~45°, which makes this movement the most notable conformational change during the inward-to-outward cycle⁷, positioning TMH1a into the hydrophobic bilayer. The movement in TMH1a' is much smaller in BetP and not even existent in Mhp1. Although flexibility of TMH1a was suggested by single-molecule fluorescence resonance energy transfer (smFRET) studies¹⁴, it is unclear whether the marked conformational change of TMH1a in LeuT is a consequence of the mutations introduced in the crystallization variant causing the weakening of the Na2 binding site and the perturbation of the intracellular gate, and to what extent this movement would take place in the native membrane environment. In the same context, we cannot entirely rule out that in a more native environment BetP might adopt a conformation which exhibits more pronounced flexing of TMH1a'.

The discrepancy between the hinge-like bending movements of TMH1 and TMH6 in LeuT and BetP might also originate from the fact that in LeuT both helices possess a very flexible stretch, whereas in BetP this is true only for TMH1'. The midsection of TMH6', being composed largely of hydrophobic residues (Ser-Pro-Phe-Val), is more rigid, as reflected by the smaller bending angle. On the other hand, hinge-like bending motions of TMH1' were not observed for Mhp1¹⁰

(Supplementary Fig. 8), as the corresponding region (Ala-Ile-Gln-Val-Ala) is quite hydrophobic and presumably rather rigid.

Additional gating-like movements in BetP are observed for TMH5' and TMH10' (Figs 2 and 3), which are assigned as thin gates in the alternating-access mechanism of Mhp1¹⁰. In BetP, TMH5' constrains the cytoplasmic pathway in the outward-facing open state. During substrate translocation it moves out of the central pathway, undergoing a 9° tilt. The structurally equivalent extracellular part of TMH10' constrains the periplasmic pathway in the inward-open state, which is again released when BetP returns to the outward-open state by a movement of 5.7 Å and a massive tilt of 41° relative to the membrane normal. In contrast to the conformational change of TMH5', TMH10' is able to move further away, as it is stabilized by the presence of TMH(-1) and TMH(-2). Interestingly, the presence of a closed transition state implies that these periplasmic and cytoplasmic gates undergo uncoupled hinge movements in BetP.

A new property revealed is the spring-like movement of the unfolded region of TMH1'. This stretch shows remarkable plasticity in BetP, which is related to the transient coordination of sodium ions during the alternating-access cycle (Fig. 4). In fact, the unfolded stretch in TMH1' provides backbone carbonyls for the coordination of sodium in the Na2 site (Fig. 4). The plasticity is therefore affected by binding and dissipation of the positive charge of the coupling sodium in the Na2 site, inducing considerable backbone dihedral changes, as proposed for LeuT¹⁵, ApcT¹⁵ and vSGLT¹⁶ transporters. In general, partly unfolded transmembrane helices provide the structural flexibility to couple electrochemically favoured binding and release of ions to alternating opening and closing of 'gates'¹⁷. Indeed, all the structural elements involved in the transformation of BetP from the outward- to inward-facing state are either directly involved in the formation of the sodium-binding sites, such as in the case of the bundle helices TMH1' and TMH6' and the hash-motif helices TMH3' and TMH8' (Fig. 4), or indirectly involved such as the thin-gate helices TMH5' and TMH10'

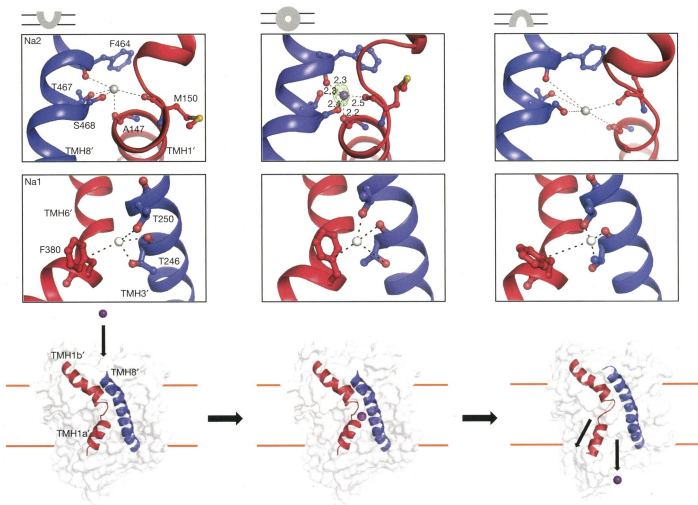


Figure 4 | Conformational changes of the sodium-binding sites.

a, Comparison of the Na2 and Na1 sodium-binding sites in the C_{α} , C_{β} and C_{γ} states of BetP. Sodium ions, in white, are presented to schematize the location of the Na2 and Na1 sites. $F_o - F_c$ map, in green, is presented at the 3.0σ level for

the Na2 site located in PDB accession 4AIN. A schematic of sodium-induced conformational change of TMH1a' is also shown. Vectorial movement of sodium through the Na2 site induces a spring-like movement of the cytoplasmic part of TMH1', which renders the cytoplasmic pathway accessible.

(Fig. 3). This correlates well with the absolute requirement of the presence of sodium to allow betaine symport.

In the outward-open and closed states, residues forming the Na2 site provide reasonable coordination for sodium. By contrast, in the inward-open state the coordinating residues are too distant to coordinate a sodium ion, which is a consequence of the main-chain conformational changes of TMH1a' (Fig. 4). We suggest that the Na2 site is perturbed in the inward-open state, which is in agreement with reports for LeuT⁹ and by molecular dynamics (MD) simulations on several LeuT-like fold transporters^{15,16}. Recently, the position of the Na1 site in BetP was identified (Khafizov *et al.*, manuscript in preparation), formed by side chains of residues Phe 380 in TMH6', Thr 246 and Thr 250 in TMH3'. A proper coordination sphere of sodium in the Na1 site is only established in the closed state; in the outward- and inward-facing states residues in TMH3' and TMH6' are too distant to coordinate sodium ions (Fig. 4).

Both ions bind at the interface between the scaffold and bundle helices (Supplementary Fig. 9), which move relative to one another during the alternating-access cycle. The cytoplasmic and periplasmic gates show a symmetry-related mechanism related to the binding and release of sodium ions at the two binding sites. In BetP, sodium binding to Na2 relates to 'opening-closing' of the cytoplasmic gates, while binding to Na1 relates to 'opening-closing' of the periplasmic gates (Figs 3 and 4). In the outward-facing conformation, TMH5', which is

the cytoplasmic 'thin' gate, interacts closely with TMH1a' via a dense network of hydrophilic and hydrophobic interactions. During transition to the inward-open state, release of sodium from the Na2 site triggers the movement of TMH1a', which detaches from TMH5', leading to a full opening of the cytoplasmic pathway. Also, in the outward-facing conformation TMH3' and TMH6a', which coordinate the sodium ion at Na1, are far away from one another, not allowing proper coordination of sodium. In this conformation TMH10', which is the periplasmic 'thin' gate, adopts a conformation that renders the periplasmic pathway accessible, being pulled by interactions with TMH9'. We suggest that binding of sodium to the Na1 site brings together TMH3', TMH6' and TMH9', initiating a cascade of structural rearrangements that result in closure of the periplasmic pathway.

Our data indicate that differences such as the location of sodium-binding sites, the unique coordination of the substrate by the Na1 sodium ion in LeuT¹⁸, or the absence of a Na1 sodium ion as in the case of Mhp1 are responsible for the relative contributions of rigid body rotation versus gating hinge movements observed in each transporter. Consequently, the conservation of the Na2 site is the unifying element in the LeuT-like fold transport mechanism. The alternating-access mechanisms of LeuT-fold transporters share common mechanistic principles; however, for each individual transporter the primary structure and specific coordination of substrate and co-substrates will dictate to what extent 'rocking bundle' and 'gating' can occur.

METHODS SUMMARY

Escherichia coli DH5 α was used for the heterologous expression of *strep-betP*. Membranes were solubilized using β -dodecyl-maltoside (DDM), and BetP was purified by affinity chromatography via Strep-Tactin macroprep and size-exclusion chromatography^{3,19}. Uptake of labelled betaine was measured in *E. coli* MKH13 cells, started by adding 5–250 μ M of [¹⁴C] betaine upon an osmotic shock adjusted with KCl²⁰. Binding assays were performed in proteoliposomes using tryptophan fluorescence emission between 315 and 370 nm with an excitation wavelength set to 295 nm²¹. Data from BetP(AN29/E44E45E46/AAA/G153D) crystals obtained in the presence of 1 mM choline were collected to 3.2 Å at beamline id29 at the European Synchrotron Radiation Facility (ESRF). The structure was determined by molecular replacement using BetP (PDB accession 3P03) as the search model (Supplementary Table 1). BetP(AN29/E44E45E46/AAA) was crystallized in the presence of 5 mM betaine and a data set to 3.1 Å was collected at the PXII beamline of the Swiss Light Source (SLS). The structure was determined by molecular replacement using BetP (PDB accession 4AMR) as the search model (Supplementary Table 1). For more details, see Supplementary Methods.

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Supplementary Information is available in the online version of the paper.

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Author Contributions C.P. performed mutations, activity and binding measurements in cells and proteoliposomes, crystallization, collection and processing of data for PDB accession 4DOI; C.K. performed crystallization for PDB accession 4AIN; C.K. and O.Y. performed collection and processing of data for PDB accession 4AMR; C.P., C.K. and C.Z. analysed the data; C.Z. directed the research; and C.P. and C.Z. wrote the manuscript.

Author Information Coordinates and structure factors for the structures presented here have been deposited in the Protein Data Bank under accession 4DOI and 4AIN. Reprints and permissions information is available at www.nature.com/reprints. The authors declare no competing financial interests. Readers are welcome to comment on the online version of the paper. Correspondence and requests for materials should be addressed to C.Z. (christine.ziegler@biophys.mpg.de).

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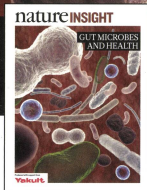
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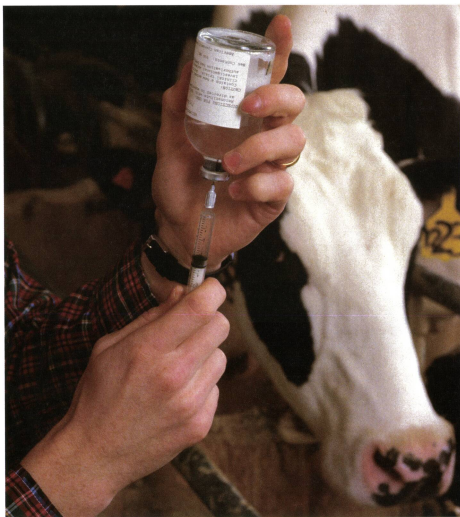
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HIGHER EDUCATION

Beyond the farm

Veterinary expertise is an advantage for researchers hoping to stem disease outbreaks and bolster food safety.

BY AMY MAXMEN

In 2002, Newcastle disease spread rapidly through chickens in Los Angeles, California. More than 6,500 poultry died in the effort to control the outbreak. "It took virtually the entire available veterinary staff at the USDA [US Department of Agriculture]

to isolate and eradicate the disease in three months," says Alan Kelly, dean emeritus of the School of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. He fears that if highly infectious foot-and-mouth disease ever reached the United States — it hit the United Kingdom in 2007 and Japan in 2010 — the nation might not have enough

veterinarians to contain it. The trend towards hot summers in some areas could exacerbate viral epidemics, providing favourable conditions for the spread of zoonotic diseases such as West Nile virus and hantavirus.

With the notable exception of clinical practice, shortages haunt pretty much all the sectors in which veterinarians typically look for jobs. Within government, academia and industry, alike, positions for veterinarians with master's degrees or PhDs remain vacant, according to a report by the US National Research Council (NRC) published at the end of May and written by a committee chaired by Kelly. The committee was formed after members of the US Congress expressed concerns about whether the nation had enough personnel to monitor zoonotic disease outbreaks, regulate food safety and evaluate medicines. "The Department of Labor predicts a lot of opportunities for veterinarians, and I think many of those opportunities will open up in the near future," says Michael Gilsdorf, executive vice-president of the National Association of Federal Veterinarians, based in Washington DC.

Veterinarians in research-related posts say that many people are not aware of the versatility of a veterinary career. "People have a very narrow view of what veterinarians do," says Bonnie Buntain, a public-health expert at the University of Calgary in Canada who started out as a horse veterinarian. "Who would have thought that a horse vet from Hawaii would be guiding national regulations on food safety and humane animal treatment in Washington DC at the USDA, and then be offered a tenured professor position?" Those who like to apply analytical skills to real-world problems in research laboratories, the environment, the food supply and beyond will find ample opportunities — but they may have to invest in some extra schooling.

DETECTIVE WORK

Research veterinarians have much to offer. Federal and state governments need them to identify animals with disease; enforce humane slaughter regulations; track wildlife; monitor *Escherichia coli* and *Salmonella* in food; detect the effects of toxic compounds in the ecosystem; inspect dog-breeding facilities and more. Most of the veterinarians involved in government work are employed by the USDA. More-specialized positions are available at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ▶

► (CDC). At the NIH in Bethesda, Maryland, veterinarians preside over animal facilities, or study cancer and other diseases in animals. At the FDA, based in Silver Spring, Maryland, they investigate food safety, and help to regulate the genetically modified (GM) animals that are slowly making their way through the FDA's regulatory pipeline. And at the CDC in Atlanta, Georgia, they monitor zoonotic disease outbreaks.

Internationally, industry positions for people with a doctorate in veterinary medicine (DVM) and a master's or PhD in toxicology, pharmacokinetics or another field are becoming ever more lucrative. Jobs at pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies pay base salaries ranging from US\$85,000 to \$150,000, depending on the level of seniority. Mary McConnel, a strategic initiatives director at Pfizer, says that her combination of a DVM and a master's in business seemed to be in demand. As soon as she sent her CV to Pfizer, "they were after me like a bat out of hell," she says. McConnel enjoys her job as a consultant for veterinary businesses, and the generous salary that goes with it.

In general, those with a DVM and a science degree have a variety of options in pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies. They might conduct experiments on the efficacy and safety of drugs in animals before human trials begin, or they might help to develop treatments for animals. At animal-supply companies, they often develop and care for GM laboratory animals. At diagnostic laboratory companies, they develop diagnostic tests for both pets and laboratory animals.

SHORTFALL SOLUTIONS

For all their usefulness, however, research veterinarians have been on the decline — especially in government. According to a 2009 report by the US Government Accountability Office, the number of veterinarians working for the federal government had fallen by 40% since 1990. And one-third of veterinarians employed by the USDA, the FDA and the US Army were due to retire in 2011.

Meanwhile, veterinary schools in the United States and the United Kingdom say that they struggle to find candidates that have both clinical and research experience. According to the NRC report, roughly 11% of the veterinarians with faculty positions will be retiring by 2016. Plus, student enrolment at veterinary schools is increasing, which is pushing up the demand for teachers. At the University of Glasgow, UK, Nicholas Jonsson says that the university is now having to hire veterinarians who do not have PhDs. "In the past that would have been unthinkable," he says, "but we desperately need faculty for teaching and clinical posts."

Although most of Jonsson's students pursue careers in pet medicine, he encourages them to consider a career that goes beyond the day-to-day routine of clinical practice.

Jonsson started his career as a farm-animal

veterinarian in rural Australia. For him, it was a less-than-ideal job, he says. "You're on call every other weekend, you drive a lot, you're kicked and beaten and stomped." He then returned to university for a PhD, and later moved to Glasgow, where he researches the evolution of drug resistance in parasites.

US agencies have made some effort to entice new talent. In 2003, the NIH's National Cancer Institute launched a programme for graduate-level biomedical education in partnership with DVM programmes at veterinary colleges across the country. The seven alumni who have completed the NIH Comparative Biomedical Scientist Training programme have gone on to work as postdocs, tenure-track assistant professors, NIH staff scientists and industry pathologists. And in 2008, the CDC introduced a two-year research-focused residency programme with the aim of addressing a shortage of veterinarians to monitor disease outbreaks.

DUAL-DEGREE ADVANTAGE

The path to many research-veterinarian opportunities entails a dual degree, usually with a focus on both veterinary medicine and a basic science such as toxicology, genetics, epidemiology or parasitology. Of the 28 veterinary schools in the United States, 13 offer joint DVM-PhD programmes.

The price of veterinary school alone — around \$66,000 per year for a four-year degree in the United States, and under half that in the United Kingdom for UK citizens — presents an obstacle. After accumulating \$140,000 in debt, Kelly says, young veterinarians tend to want to start earning money rather than enrol in graduate programmes that offer, at best, modest stipends. "It's a desperate situation that has to change," Kelly says. "Salaries need to increase and the cost of veterinary education has to

decrease." The NRC report recommends that the government, economists, industry, deans and veterinary organizations create strategies to reduce the costs of veterinary schools — such as sharing facilities and starting online courses.

Grants from the NIH, called T32 institutional training awards, provide salaries for pre- and postdoctoral DVMs pursuing biomedical research. Merck, Pfizer and other large drug companies offer fellowships to support DVMs who want to return to a research career.

Despite the high price tag of veterinary school, Claude Nagamine says that pursuing the DVM was his best career move — he relishes not only the frequent interaction with animals but also the job security. He decided to pursue a DVM after failing to earn tenure as an assistant professor in the cell-biology department at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee.

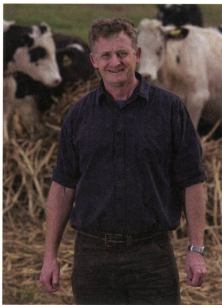
As he pondered his next move, he says, he realized he loved working with animals. He had spoken with veterinarians working in the animal facility and was intrigued.

Immediately after veterinary school, he began a research residency at an animal-care facility at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Cambridge, and ended up at Stanford University in California, where he not only conducts his own research, but also helps scientist colleagues to navigate the regulations and paperwork involved in animal experimentation. "If you're driven to do publishable research, there are lots of jobs out there," he says.

Research veterinarian Anne Fairbrother says that her work combines research with investigative pursuits. Fairbrother, who holds a DVM and a PhD in wildlife disease, worked at the US Environmental Protection Agency for 13 years, monitoring the risks posed by GM plants on wildlife. This often involved checking the concentration of chemicals in soil, plants and water, and then comparing them with concentrations in animal serum and tissue.

Or, if animals start to die in abnormal numbers, she might be asked to search for clues related to parasite or viral infections, compounds such as petroleum that might have leaked from gas stations and signs of industrial pollutants. "If you go to a place where there is contamination, you know what questions to ask to find out the history of the area and which signs to look for, because sometimes chemicals are causing problems but it could be something else," she says. "That diagnostic approach is something that you learn in veterinary school."

But a love for animals is probably the main requirement for researchers looking to multiply their career options with a DVM degree. At a time when degrees and certifications rarely confer job guarantees, the veterinary research option stands apart. ■



Nicholas Jonsson encourages students to go beyond the usual career choice of pet medicine.

Amy Maxmen is a locum biology correspondent at Nature.

TURNING POINT

Ethan Perlstein

Ethan Perlstein has spent five years creating a sub-field of research that calls evolutionary pharmacology. As his fellowship at Princeton University's Lewis-Sigler Institute for Integrative Genomics in New Jersey comes to an end and he searches for his next academic post, Perlstein is maintaining an innovatively designed website adorned with modules and discussion threads to help to communicate his thoughts on science.

When did you first start fostering communication among scientists?

I was an intern at a small biotech company before my final year of high school. As part of that, I would read immunology articles, formulate questions and start a correspondence with the author. One of these authors was Ronald Germain, an immunologist at the US National Institutes of Health. He must have been struck by the idea of a kid reading papers; he offered me another internship, in his lab in Bethesda, Maryland, where I worked for the summer before going to Columbia University in New York to study sociology.

How did you come to champion evolutionary pharmacology?

After several rotations in different labs as a cell-biology graduate student at Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts, I realized that I wanted to work with small molecules relevant to human diseases. I also wanted to use a simple model system, such as yeast, so that I could do a lot of experiments quickly. I noticed that several small molecules that affect yeast growth are also psychiatric drugs, and I started studying the connection. There is a large evolutionary distance between yeast and humans, but these drugs affect ancient processes that we share.

How is your job search going?

Like many of my colleagues, I have been battered by the job market. I received zero interviews out of 18 applications this year, despite having a five-year independent position with a US\$1-million budget on my CV. The fellowship has been great, but it is not a normal postdoc, so I am not sure that the wider community of scientists knows what to make of it. I am a research cross-pollinator, and don't have one well-known area of expertise. I wonder if it may be harder for me to break out.

Has your decision to invest time, money and energy in your website paid off?

I think so. Most academics use a lab website



to list publications; essentially it becomes static, a version of their CV. I wanted to do something new and cool that would help to communicate science. I am not a programmer, so I spent several thousand dollars of my own money on hiring a professional design team to create something interactive. It includes my tweets, blog posts and research summaries — replete with pop-culture references — in a series of modules that encourage viewers to add their own comments. It seems to work: one private-sector researcher who checked out my website contacted me about mutually beneficial research opportunities.

One post on your website breaks down your academic lab budget. Why share this?

My fellowship finishes at the end of the year, and I am interested in crowd-funding a project on how amphetamines such as crystal meth work. I am asking for roughly \$25,000, and I thought that I should give potential funders evidence that I am responsible with money. I see this as part of the same movement as a group of scientists who are posting their grant proposals — whether they are successful or not. I am excited about experimenting with the way we do science.

What has been your career turning point?

Without a doubt, joining Twitter in 2011, when I started offering my thoughts about changing the way science is done. I found a community of people passionate about rethinking scholarly publishing and funding. I had hoped for a way to scale up the e-mail cold-calling that I had done at high school. Twitter was a way to connect with like-minded people and keep a conversation going 24/7. ■

INTERVIEW BY VIRGINIA GEWIN

FUNDING

People power

Researchers are starting to turn to crowd-funding as a way to support their work, says Simon Vincent, head of personal awards and training at Cancer Research UK in London. At the 20 September Naturejobs Career Expo in London, Vincent said that in a lean funding environment, seeking donors can be easier than navigating the grant-application process. "There's no peer review or middlemen," he told conference attendees. "If you have a good idea and can convince enough people, you get the money." But Vincent warned that crowd-funding — seeking funds through the online community — also has downsides. Traditional research-grant peer review provides quality control, a reality check and a way to hone and refine an idea, and the interaction with the funder can provide links to large, established networks in the scientific community. Crowd-funding, even with established sites such as petridish.org, requires a lot of time and public interaction, Vincent said. Scientists often have to make a video about their research project and must stay in regular contact with donors, who can number in the hundreds.

ETHICS

Relationship advice

A university conflict-of-interest committee should review contracts between academic scientists and industry sponsors that are worth US\$5,000 or more, concludes a draft report entitled Recommended Principles & Practices to Guide Academy-Industry Relationships. Researchers should never ghostwrite research papers and should resist oversight of intellectual property and a stake in the proceeds from patents, according to the proposal. The report offers 56 guidelines for maintaining academic freedom and upholding ethical conduct in partnerships and collaborations between academics and industrial sponsors. Issued on 18 September, it was written by the American Association of University Professors in Washington DC in response to the increasing number and complexity of such partnerships, says co-author Cary Nelson, a past president of the association. "The corrupting power of money has become much more clear," he says, noting that issues such as sponsors suppressing data from studies and persuading eminent researchers to add their names to papers they did not write seem to be on the rise.

SPOTLIGHT ON TEXAS, USA

Transforming universities in Texas

Major state funding initiatives are helping bolster research at public institutions in Texas

"One of the reasons why these programmes work well in Texas is that we collaborate."

David Gorenstein, University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston

IN 2009 a group of universities in Texas were presented with a golden opportunity. The state legislature passed House Bill 51, a stimulus package including a fund worth more than \$400 million designed to boost the number of nationally ranked tier-one research institutions in Texas. The state's higher-education regulator designated seven public universities that would be eligible for funding from the bill once they attained certain benchmarks. Now two of the chosen institutions, Texas Tech University and the University of Houston, have seized the opportunity and met the grade — more than two years ahead of schedule.

The funding from House Bill 51 is part of a comprehensive plan to raise the profile of public universities in Texas. Institutions are capitalizing on various initiatives to hire faculty, build new facilities and train graduate students — even in the midst of a sluggish economy. "It's very exciting," says Guy Bailey, who was president of Texas Tech University until he moved to the

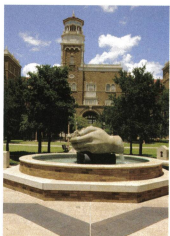
University of Alabama, taking over the presidency there last month. "Everybody understands the importance of the situation. You get one chance to get it right."

Reaching the top tier

Texas already has three tier-one research universities: the University of Texas at Austin, Texas A&M University and the private Rice University. But California boasts nine, and New York has seven. Texan legislators deemed that having only three tier-one universities in such a large state was unacceptably low. As part of House Bill 51 they passed a constitutional amendment that repurposed a dormant US\$425 million higher-education fund into the National Research University Fund (NRUF).

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) nominated seven emerging research universities (ERUs) that could compete for funds: the University of Houston, Texas Tech University, the University of Texas at Arlington, the University of Texas at Dallas, the University of Texas at San Antonio, the University of Texas at El Paso and the University of North Texas. In January 2012, Texas State University-San Marcos was added to the list. To receive payouts from the NRUF, these universities need to spend at least US\$45 million on research for two consecutive years and satisfy four out of a further six criteria, also for two consecutive years. The criteria include having an endowment of at least \$400 million, awarding at least 200 doctoral degrees and achieving certain measures of quality for students, faculty and graduate programmes.

"When these funds were established in 2009, none of these universities met [the criteria]," says Bailey, formerly of Texas Tech. "It was anticipated that it would



Texas Tech University is working towards tier-one status with state support.

take at least five years." But in May this year, both Texas Tech and the University of Houston passed muster and gained access to the funds. Bailey anticipates that the payout will be about US\$7 to \$9 million per year initially — essential seed money to help build research capacity.

House Bill 51 also provided immediate support through the Texas Research Incentive Program (TRIP) to give all the ERUs a head-start towards reaching the main funding criteria. TRIP set aside US\$50 million to match private gifts designated for research, including endowed chairs, equipment, graduate stipends or fellowships. That promise of matching funds helped schools in their private fundraising efforts. "Private donors see that they're getting two dollars for every dollar they put in. It helped enormously," Bailey says. "Many of our biggest donors had major gifts they were going to give to athletics, and they put those off to support the research efforts."



Research spend by public institutions

Research expenditure of public universities in 2011 (US\$)

Texas A&M University	\$635m
The University of Texas at Austin	\$592m
Texas Tech University	\$143m
University of Houston	\$94m
The University of Texas at Dallas	\$93m
The University of Texas at El Paso	\$69m
The University of Texas at Arlington	\$66m
The University of Texas at San Antonio	\$57m
Texas State University-San Marcos	\$33m
University of North Texas	\$25m

Source: Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

Texas Tech's plans to reach tier-one status include recruiting 500 new faculty members by 2020 — 50 per year in addition to replacements — as well as 1,000 graduate assistants. "Some strategic hires will help us move our research programmes forward," explains Bailey, adding that the strength of these initial appointments should act as leverage to attract further high-quality staff. The university has a number of endowed chairs to fill, mostly in engineering. The expansion of faculty will be accompanied by a concerted push for increased student enrollment over this

decade, from 32,000 currently to 40,000 by 2020. Most of that increase will be in the graduate student population, says Taylor Eighmy, Texas Tech's former senior vice-president for research, now at the University of Tennessee. And NRU funds aside, the university has significantly bolstered its research budget: total money spent increased from US\$86 million in 2009 to US\$143 million in 2012, growth of more than 66 percent.

The University of Houston is already well on the way to being accepted as a tier-one university. In January 2011 the Carnegie Foundation, a policy and research

centre that evaluates universities, awarded the institution the highest classification given to research universities — one of several accolades that confer recognized tier-one status.

Towards financial security

The NRU funding model is not a new approach: Texas has a long history of committing state revenues to higher education. The constitution of 1876 established the Permanent University Fund (PUF), a public endowment that provides income from oil, gas and other mineral resources to the University of Texas and Texas A&M University systems. At the end of 2011, the market value of the fund was more than US\$12 billion. This year, the fund will pay out US\$576 million to 24 institutes and agencies within the two university systems.

The state also offers money through the Competitive Knowledge Fund, which gives research universities \$1 for every \$10 in external research grants they receive. "It's a tremendous incentive," says Jeffrey Seemann, vice president for research of Texas A&M University. "You can see that this state is doing a number of things to provide for its tier-one, flagship research institutions, even in these difficult financial times."

As part of the current strategy that includes the NRU, Texas is also pushing for more general investment in research in the state. In October 2010, THECB adopted an initiative called Closing the Gaps by 2015: the Texas Higher Education Plan. It outlined plans to narrow gaps between Texas and other states in four areas: student enrollment, granting of degrees, excellence and research. Public universities and health-related institutions are setting an example for the rest of the state: by 2008 they had already exceeded their allocated target of US\$3 billion spent on R&D and as of 2010 the expenditure totalled \$3.55 billion, well above the projected target. The Closing the Gaps initiative also aims to increase Texas' share of federal money for science and engineering research and development (R&D) from 5.5 percent of the national total in 2000 to 6.5 percent by 2015.

Prioritizing cancer research

Another state research initiative is the Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas (CPRIT). Created in 2007 after a constitutional amendment, CPRIT acts as a state funding agency for cancer research. The institute issues grants from a US\$3 billion pot, making it the second-largest source of funding for cancer research in the United States — second only to the National Cancer Institute (NCI).

CPRIT prioritizes basic science, clinical research and cancer prevention programmes, awarding \$300 million a year for cancer-related research to public and private entities in Texas. Bill Gimson, executive director of CPRIT, says the agency sees research as vital to state infrastructure. "What we build today will still be bringing returns to the state of Texas for the next 30 years," he says. CPRIT's biggest achievement to date has been to establish the US\$25-million Statewide Clinical Trials Network of Texas. The network will match patients to appropriate clinical trials based on individual cancer profiles obtained by geneticists from Baylor College of Medicine in Houston.

CPRIT's grants are highly competitive and equally



The College Park Center is the centerpiece of the University of Texas, Arlington's "College Park District" — a residential and commercial development which occupies a 20-acre section of the campus.

prestigious. Instead of replacing federal funding, the two work in synergy, explains David Gorenstein, associate dean for research at the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston (UTHealth) Medical School. "One helps fund the other, and then you become more competitive," he says. "The focus is to really make the Houston area, and Texas in general, one of the major cancer research centers in the country."

Translational medicine — getting new drugs and therapies into clinical use — is a major focus for CPRIT. It encourages universities and research institutes to recruit talent from industry to work alongside academics. "[You need] a different skill-set to understand what it takes to develop a new antibody or small-molecule drug and translate it into a clinical effort," says Gorenstein. "It takes large teams and major investments."

As well as expanding the state's research capabilities and creating

high-quality jobs, CPRIT also attracts top talent to Texas through its Scholar in Cancer Research Program, which provides support for faculty at all levels from junior professors to established investigators. CPRIT has helped universities to fund 56 scholars so far, contributing 50 percent of each compensation package. "We are bringing people from all over the country to Texas to make us number one," Gimson says.

The close collaboration between institutions in Texas helps ensure that CPRIT funds make the biggest possible impact. For example, in March 2011 it awarded more than US\$12 million to the Gulf Coast Consortia (GCC), which comprises Baylor College of Medicine, Rice University, the University of Houston, the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston, the University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston and the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center. The GCC used the funds

to launch a high-throughput drug screening programme that provides its researchers with equipment and processes usually only available to scientists in large pharmaceutical companies.

Universal ambition

The state's commitment to research is a welcome boost for many Texan institutions, both public and private. "The economic climate in our country, Texas included, has made it harder to get philanthropic support in virtually every institution," says James Willerson, president and medical director of the Texas Heart Institute at St Luke's Episcopal Hospital in Houston.

With the help of state funding, tier-one Texas A&M continues to build upon its established research strengths. "We are focused on maintaining and trying to match our excellence in agriculture and engineering with new capacities in the life and biomedical science arenas," says Seemann.

Texas Tech, located in Lubbock

in north-west Texas, is planning to invest strategically in 13 areas including renewable energy, neuroscience, bioinformatics and cancer research. "Our internal goals are very integrated with the desires of the state," Eighthmy says. The university will also need a million square feet of additional space, adds Bailey, much of that devoted to research labs. Plans are in place to establish a research park on the western edge of the campus, with construction scheduled to start in 2013.

Although Texas Tech and the University of Houston won the race for NRUF funds, their fellow ERUs are still working toward this goal, and the state's institutions recognize the need for a team effort. "One of the reasons why these programmes work well in Texas is that we collaborate," says UTHealth's Gorenstein. "We're still competitive but we also realize that working together makes us successful."

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Wolfgang Herrmann, President, Technische Universität München

ADVERTISEMENT FEATURE



Technische Universität München

"The less there is to justify a traditional custom, the harder it is to get rid of it," wrote Mark Twain. Wolfgang A. Herrmann, president of TUM (Technische Universität München) seeks to disprove Twain's notion. Herrmann is creating the first-ever U.S.-style tenure system at a German university – effectively scrapping Germany's 100+ year-old habilitation tradition. Habilitation requires would-be professors to complete the equivalent of a second PhD dissertation – and also find a faculty sponsor. Once aboard, that professor had little chance to advance within that university, and the department had no clear way to evaluate that professor. TUM is upending this tradition by creating 100 new positions by 2020 – all without the habilitation requirement, but with performance reviews after six years. Depending on the review's outcome, those professors will be given permanent status and a promotion or will leave TUM for a different job; those who achieve tenure will have an opportunity to advance further, through another evaluation process, to full professor. Herrmann tells *Nature* how his changes will help recruit, develop and retain top international scientific talent.

Q: In your booklet introducing TUM's tenure track system, you talk about a "paradigm shift." Why the need for such a dramatic change?

The German recruitment system has traditionally been very rigid. If you enter into a certain professorship at a certain level, you have to stay at exactly that level unless you move to another university. We think that this is not a competitive system inside the university and especially not in an international setting. The German system cannot recruit the top international talent if that talent cannot move up within the same university. There is no evaluation process in the current German system.

Q: What's the importance of evaluation and advancement?

We need to get a better record of people and how they perform. And professors deserve feedback. The best people welcome input on their job performance. Tenure-track scientists will be motivated because if they perform well, they can move up. Why would you move from a postdoc at Stanford to TUM if you have no future beyond

the offered position? Young professors need an opportunity to move up. Also, why should we not promote outstanding people within our own university? In the existing system, as professors excel, their only chances of promotion are at other institutions. We want to keep the talent we develop. On the other hand, we will not tenure someone who has not qualified for promotion at the same time. The motto is "up or out."

Q: How will the tenure track system transform TUM?

We are going to create 100 new faculty positions between now and 2020 – boosting the overall number of professorships by more than 20 percent. In addition, we will transform 30 percent of the existing professorships into tenure track positions as they become vacant. We expect our reforms will make our faculty younger, more international, dynamic and competitive. We expect to fill 40 percent of our new faculty positions with people from outside Germany. We are confident of such interest, because our advancement system provides opportunities that no other German university can provide.

Q: Why are you emphasizing youth?

Right now, the average age of first professorship in Germany is around 40, with a disproportionate amount of faculty significantly older, especially when they join us from industry. We need a better mix of young, highly active people along with more experienced people to create a more dynamic intellectual environment. Along with the "young brain," we want people with international experience – someone who has had at least a year abroad.

Q: What are you doing to increase the number of female faculty?

When I started as president in 1997, we had 3 female professors out of 420. Now we are at 14 percent. For a technical university this is a lot, but it is still not enough. Our target is 25 percent by 2025. We have introduced a number of family-friendly and gender-compatible conditions, like flexible options for parental leave. We don't like quotas. But we also don't like passing over talent. Right now, far above 50 percent of Germany's medical students are female, but there are very few female medical professors and hardly any

women holding key chair positions or heading departments. So, clearly female talent is out there. We just haven't done a great job of recognizing, recruiting and advancing it. Our reforms are designed to change that.

Q: How do you think other German universities will respond to your reforms?

For a couple of years there has been a strong feeling in Germany that the traditional recruitment system has to change. But no university was prepared to propose a true end-to-end tenure track system. I think we will get a lot of interest in replicating our design. But we have a big head start. We started thinking about these changes in 2006, when we competed and won in the German "Excellence Initiative." We proposed implementing these strategies in 2012, when we applied for – and won – another round of the Excellence Initiative. That "excellence" label is more important than the €2.7 billion the program apportions among the winning universities over a five-year period. It is an endorsement of our strategy. As such, we expect other universities to take notice of it.

Q: How did your own career inform the changes you are making at TUM?

I was exposed to the idea of being internationally competitive early on. I studied under Nobel laureate E. O. Fischer in Munich. Then as a postdoc at Penn State University, I got exposed to the U.S. tenure track system. That further opened my eyes to the idea of competition. Then, during my only sabbatical, I spent time at Hoechst Corporate Research. That let me observe the career paths of industrial chemists across the world and made me wonder why academic chemists couldn't advance inside their own institution as well. Finally, I have had a number of outstanding international postdocs – none of whom stayed in Germany, because their advancement opportunities were so limited.

Q: How do you feel about changing traditions?

We have to use our traditions where they give us specific strengths. But we have to look outside for new ideas as well. The U.S.-style tenure track system is something many other countries have adopted. It is time Germany tries it as well.



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The scholar will contribute to teaching on the Bachelor and Master level of the Bioinformatics study section realized by Bioinformatics Munich, a network bringing together the expertise in bioinformatics at several research institutions in Munich (TUM, LMU, GSF, MPI). Additional contributions to the study sections of the Department of Informatics are also expected. The active desire for interdisciplinary work within the different departments and centers of the TUM and its clinics are an essential criterion for the selection.

Applications should be submitted to: **Dean of Department of Informatics**, Technische Universität München, Boltzmannstr. 3, 85748 Garching, Germany or as PDF-document to: bewerbung.dekanat@in.tum.de

The TUM Department of Chemistry invites applications for a

Tenure Track Assistant Professorship COMPUTATIONAL BIOCATALYSIS

The professorship is associated with the newly established TUM Catalysis Research Center, and complements its existing competences. We are looking for an excellent junior scientist with a high potential for developing an internationally recognized research agenda in the field of Computational Biocatalysis. The successful candidate is expected to conduct research focused on the modeling of the dynamics and (catalytic) functionality of biological (macro-)molecules. The quantitative description of corresponding systems and concomitant scale-bridging processes dictates the use and development of highly efficient numerical approaches and the combination of different methodological approaches. Candidates are expected to have demonstrated excellence in research in one or several of these areas.

Applications should be submitted to: **Dean of Department of Chemistry**, Technische Universität München, Lichtenbergstr. 4, 85747 Garching, Germany or as PDF-document to: dekanat@ch.tum.de

The TUM Center of Life and Food Sciences Weihenstephan invites applications for a

Tenure Track Assistant Professorship ECOPHYSIOLOGY OF HORTICULTURAL PLANTS

We are looking for an excellent junior scientist with a high potential for developing an internationally recognized research agenda in the field of ecophysiology of horticultural plants in protected production systems. The successful candidate is expected to conduct research and teaching in artificial light application, genotype-environment interaction, sensor-technology, resource management, or precision farming. We expect scientific objectives relevant for horticultural plant production. Desired research activities would be at the interface of plants and technics with a possible link to faculties of physics or engineering at TUM. The successful candidate will join interdisciplinary research groups of the department as well as the Hans Eisenmann-Zentrum für Agricultural Science.

Applications should be submitted to: **Dean of TUM Center of Life and Food Sciences Weihenstephan**, Technische Universität München, Alte Akademie 8, 85354 Freising-Weihenstephan, Germany or as PDF-document to: dekanat@wzw.tum.de

The TUM Department of Informatics invites applications for a

Tenure Track Assistant Professorship GAMES ENGINEERING

We are looking for an excellent junior scientist with a high potential for developing an internationally recognized research agenda in the field of Games Engineering. The successful candidate is expected to conduct research and teaching in Games Engineering. The candidate should have comprehensive skills – including a university degree – in computer science. We are expecting a research record in at least one of the following fields: Realtime Rendering, Computer Animation, Visual Simulation. We are seeking for applicants who have gained experience in industrial game development, with a focus on the technical realization of immersive 3D computer games. We expect the candidate to actively take part in the Bachelor and upcoming Master program Informatics: Games Engineering, and to have an ability to pursue scientific research at international level in one of the addressed fields.

Applications should be submitted to: **Dean of Department of Informatics**, Technische Universität München, Boltzmannstr. 3, 85748 Garching, Germany or as PDF-document to: bewerbung.dekanat@in.tum.de

The initial appointment will be for 6 years with an initial pay-scale grade W2. After positive evaluation in the final year, the candidate is tenured on an Associate Professor level. Tenure evaluation may be initiated after a minimum of three years only in exceptional cases, justified by extraordinarily outstanding achievements or in regard of particularly strategic significance in shaping the university's profile.

Eligible candidates have established a strong track record in the postdoctoral phase and demonstrate pedagogical and personal aptitude as well as substantial international experience. Family leave will be taken into consideration.

Supported by competitive start-up resources, candidates are expected to develop an independent and vigorous research program. Furthermore, candidates should be committed to excellence in undergraduate/graduate teaching and in supervising PhD students.

Teaching assignments include courses in the subject area and the basic courses offered by the department as well as courses for other academic TUM departments. Prerequisites for these positions are a university degree, a doctoral degree, teaching skills at university level, and additional academic achievements (according to Art. 7 and Art. 10 BayHSchPG). The ability to teach in English is a prerequisite for TUM Professors.

As part of the Excellence Initiative of the German federal and state governments, TUM has been pursuing the strategic goal of substantially increasing the diversity of its faculty. As an equal opportunity and affirmative action employer, TUM explicitly encourages nominations of and applications from women as well as from all others who would bring additional diversity dimensions to the university's research and teaching strategies. Preference will be given to disabled candidates with essentially the same qualifications. The TUM Munich Dual Career Office provides support for dual career couples and families.

Applications accompanied by supporting documentation (CV, certificates, credentials, list of publications including 3 selected reprints, list of courses taught, presentation of research and teaching strategies, third-party funding, recommendation letters from 3 leading international academics, names and addresses of at least 3 potential peer-reviewers) should be submitted by **November 15th, 2012** to the address indicated above. All positions are to be filled as soon as possible.

naturejobs

European Head Office, London

The Maxwell Building, 4 Cranston Street, London NE 9XW, UK
Tel: +44 (0) 20 7843 4081 Fax: +44 (0) 20 7843 4996

Global Head:

Nils Moeller, +44 (0) 20 7843 4953

naturejobs@nature.com

Southwest UK/RoW:

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e.hare@nature.com

Northeast UK/Ireland:

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m.ward@nature.com

France/Switzerland/Belgium:

Julie Aramburu, +44 (0) 20 7843 4994

j.aramburo@nature.com

Scandinavia/Spain/Portugal/Italy:

Megan Ball, +44 (0) 20 7843 4973

m.ball@nature.com

North Germany/The Netherlands/Eastern Europe:

Kristin Doelling, +44 (0) 20 7843 4970

k.doelling@nature.com

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m.kubalova@nature.com

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g.to@natureasia.com

India

3a, 4th Floor, DLF Corporate Park, Gurgaon, 122 002, India

Advertisement Sales:

Vikas Chawla, +91 1242881057

v.chawla@nature.com

The Department of Cell Biology of the University of Geneva
seeks to host a

Group Leader Swiss National Science Foundation Professor in Cell Biology

POST: Independent full-time academic position in the general area of cell biology. The position will be supported by the Department and an SNSF Professorship Grant (www.snf.ch) and be for a period of 4-6 years with the possibility to switch to a tenured faculty position at the end of this period.

REQUIREMENTS: PhD degree or equivalent, 2-6 years postdoctoral research experience and a strong publication record. The successful candidate must obtain an SNSF Professorship Grant, which requires a Swiss University degree or at least 2 years of activity at a Swiss University.

STARTING DATE: Spring or summer 2014

A CV, publication list, summary of future research interests and 3 names to obtain references should be e-mailed to: jean-claude.martinou@unige.ch by December 31, 2012.

For more information visit our website:
<http://www.unige.ch/sciences/biologie/bicel>

*The University of Geneva is an equal opportunity employer
and encourages applications from female candidates.*



UNIVERSITÉ
DE GENÈVE

W228553R



Tier 2 Canada Research Chair in Primate Neuroscience

Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry and Faculty of Social Science Western University



The Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry and the Faculty of Social Science at Western University, one of Canada's leading research intensive universities, seek applicants for a Tier 2 Canada Research Chair in Primate Neuroscience. In accordance with the regulations set for Tier 2 Canada Research Chairs (www.chairs-chaires.gc.ca), the candidate will be an excellent emerging researcher who has demonstrated research creativity and innovation, and the potential to achieve international recognition in the field of Primate Neuroscience within the next five to ten years. The Candidate must propose an innovative research program of high quality which would attract excellent trainees, students and future researchers.

The Tier 2 CRC will be expected to establish an independent, externally funded, research program. The position will have excellent opportunity to collaborate with strong researchers at Western including The Brain and Mind Institute, Roberts Research Institute and Lawson Health Research Institute. Researchers with experience in novel approaches to primate neurobiology, complementing existing areas of research strength within the Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry and the Faculty of Social Science, to further strengthen the signature area of Neuroscience Research at Western are desirable. Candidates with expertise in (1) electrophysiology in local and large scale neural circuits, (2) non-human primate fMRI, or (3) novel neural modulation techniques are encouraged to apply.

The successful applicant will hold a PhD or an M.D. or equivalent, and will be a tenure track appointment at the position of Assistant Professor or at an Associate Professor level if qualifications and experience warrant. The appointment will be made to the Department of Physiology and Pharmacology in the Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry and the Department of Psychology in the Faculty of Social Science with the opportunity for a cross-appointment to an appropriate Clinical Department, and for consideration of an appointment as Scientist at the Roberts Research Institute and the Lawson Health Research Institute.

Western has a full time enrollment of about 32,000 in a range of academic and professional programs. Further information about the Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry can be found at www.schulich.uwo.ca and/or at www.uwo.ca. Western's Recruitment & Retention Office is available to assist in the transition of successful applicants and their families.

Please send a detailed curriculum vitae, a brief description of your current research program, accomplishments, and future plans, copies of representative publications, and the names of three referees to:

Dr. Denise Figlewicz
Vice Dean, Research & Innovation, Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry
Room 1240A, Roberts Research Institute
Western University
London, Ontario CANADA N6A 5C1
selection.committee@schulich.uwo.ca

Applications will be accepted until the position is filled. Review of applicants will begin after January 1, 2013.

Positions are subject to budget approval. Applicants should have fluent written and oral communication skills in English. All qualified candidates are encouraged to apply; however, Canadians and permanent residents will be given priority. The University of Western Ontario is committed to employment equity and welcomes applications from all qualified women and men, including visible minorities, aboriginal people and persons with disabilities.

NW228534R

Singapore Research Virtual Career Fair 12 & 13 October 2012



Sign up for Singapore's Research Virtual Career Fair

Looking for opportunities to advance your research career? Don't miss the second instalment of Singapore's online career platform to speak to some of the city-state's leading research and academic institutions.

If you are a researcher, faculty member or a PhD holder with a minimum of three years of work experience, sign up for the Singapore Research Virtual Career Fair and share your expertise with representatives from the city-state's top research centres, academic agencies and corporate labs. You might just find an opportunity to join them in breaking new grounds and discovering new technologies.

Singapore Research Virtual Career Fair

12 & 13 October 2012

Register NOW at:

www.contactsingapore.sg/Research/VCF/Oct2012

Show Hours:

Singapore	Melbourne/Sydney	Seoul
12 Oct, 4pm-8pm	12 Oct, 7pm-11pm	12 Oct, 5pm-9pm
13 Oct, 10am-2pm	13 Oct, 1pm-5pm	13 Oct, 11am-3pm
New York	San Francisco	London
12 Oct, 4am-8am	12 Oct, 1am-5am	12 Oct, 9am-1pm
12 Oct, 10pm-2am	12 Oct, 7pm-11pm	13 Oct, 3am-7am

For more information on working and living in Singapore, visit www.contactsingapore.sg

For enquiries, please email singapore@contactsingapore.sg

Join the Singapore Research Virtual Career Fair and find career opportunities with these organisations:



GE Water & Process Technologies



Institute of Chemical & Engineering Sciences (ICES)



Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine



Nanyang Technological University (NTU)



Singapore-MIT Alliance for Research and Technology (SMART)



Singapore University of Technology & Design (SUTD)



TUM CREATE

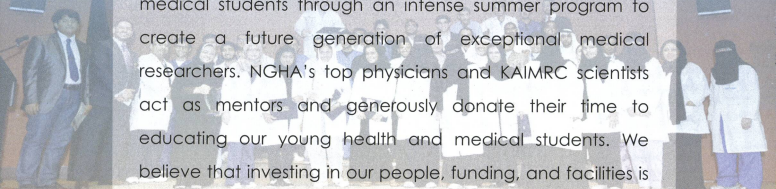


King Abdullah International
Medical Research Center

Research Summer School

The Research Summer School

at KAIMRC is simply unrivaled. We invest heavily in our young medical students through an intense summer program to create a future generation of exceptional medical researchers. NGHA's top physicians and KAIMRC scientists act as mentors and generously donate their time to educating our young health and medical students. We believe that investing in our people, funding, and facilities is priceless. Come learn more about us and join our 5th Research Summer School Program in 2013.



King Abdullah International Medical Research Center



Today's Question. Tomorrow's Answer

We are a leading international translational health science research institution that believes in creating a knowledge-based society through our channel of extraordinary human talent.

www.kaimrc.med.sa
research1@ngha.med.sa

Do you want to join one of the world's most influential cancer research institutes?

The Institute of Cancer Research, London, is one of the world's most influential cancer research institutes, with an outstanding record of achievement dating back more than 100 years. We provided the first convincing evidence that DNA damage is the basic cause of cancer, laying the foundation for the now universally accepted idea that cancer is a genetic disease. Today, The Institute of Cancer Research (ICR) leads the world at isolating cancer-related genes and discovering new targeted drugs for personalised cancer treatment. Together with our partner hospital The Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust we are rated in the top four cancer centres globally.

We are now looking to recruit exceptional scientists for senior positions at our Chelsea and Sutton sites in London, UK. These are exciting opportunities and we will be providing laboratory support – including staff, consumables and equipment – for successful candidates. We may appoint at a tenure-track equivalent or more senior level.

For further information on the ICR and an interview with our CEO Professor Alan Ashworth FRS, please go to <http://www.naturejobs.com/icr>

Team Leaders in Molecular Pathology

The ICR and our partner The Royal Marsden are together at the forefront of advances in personalised therapy for cancer. We are now looking for two team leaders to set up research groups in our brand new and state-of-the-art joint research facility, the Centre for Molecular Pathology, designed to accelerate the translation of laboratory research discoveries into benefit for cancer patients. One successful applicant will lead an independent research programme investigating the molecular pathology of gastrointestinal tract cancers, with a particular emphasis on oesophageal or colorectal tumours. The other will lead a research programme investigating the molecular pathology of gynaecological cancer.

For informal enquiries only please contact laura.wood@icr.ac.uk

Team Leader in Computational Genomics

New technologies to investigate the cancer genome have developed at such a pace that there has been an explosion in the amount of genetic information scientists can now generate about individual tumours. We are looking for a Team Leader in computational genomics, with a clear interest in cancer research, to join the Centre for Molecular Pathology to help analyse and understand this wealth of data, and use it to develop novel diagnostic, prognostic and therapeutic strategies.

For informal enquiries only please contact laura.wood@icr.ac.uk

Team Leaders in Cancer Biology

The Division of Cancer Biology, led by Professor Chris Marshall FRS, encompasses a breadth of research, from studies of oncogene function and their influence on cancer cell biology, to investigations of cancer cell migration and, extending further out, to developmental studies. This breadth reflects the Division's underlying approach of studying basic molecular and cell biology to underpin the identification of new strategies for cancer therapeutics.

We are keen to recruit Team Leaders to develop research programmes in tumour biology that build on the Division of Cancer Biology's existing strengths. We are particularly interested in candidates with expertise in tumour microenvironment, or in the investigation of the molecular basis of tumour heterogeneity. Strong candidates in other areas including proteomics, metabolism and genetically engineered models of cancer are also encouraged to apply.

For informal enquiries only please contact chris.marshall@icr.ac.uk

Team Leader in Cancer Genetics

The Division of Genetics and Epidemiology, led by Professor Nazneen Rahman, has been exceptionally successful in identifying genes that predispose to cancer. We are now seeking to appoint a new Team Leader to take advantage of our excellent sample, laboratory and computational resources to develop world-leading research, ideally focusing on scientific and/or translational germline genetic research strategies.

For informal enquiries only please contact nazneen.rahman@icr.ac.uk

To apply for these posts you must hold a PhD in a relevant discipline or a closely related discipline and have an exceptional track record of research, demonstrated by your publications. Broad-based specialist knowledge in the appropriate area is essential as is the ability to coordinate, plan and execute research at an internationally competitive standard.

For the full job descriptions and details of how to apply please see our website at <http://www.icr.ac.uk/jobsearch>

Closing date: 2 November 2012

Imagine a world where every cancer patient has their tumour profiled at diagnosis and right through the course of treatment, and their therapy adjusted for each molecular change that occurs within it. That's the exciting vision The Institute of Cancer Research (ICR), London, has for our new Tumour Profiling Unit (TPU), designed to take advantage of the explosion of genomic and proteomic information scientists can now generate about an individual patient's cancer.

We are seeking an exceptional individual to help lead this key strategic initiative, instigated under the personal direction of our Chief Executive, Professor Alan Ashworth, FRS. The **Genomics Manager** will run the genomics facility within the TPU, overseeing the installation, integration and day-to-day management of its genomics platforms. The aim will be to expand our understanding of the molecular make-up of cancer – and how it can be exploited in cancer treatment.

The post holder will engage with scientists across The ICR, with the help of the TPU head and the Scientific Advisory Committee, to develop and implement state-of-the-art technology for genomic, proteomic and epigenetic studies – all aimed at feeding information into our translational and drug discovery projects. Applicants should have a PhD in biological sciences, extensive experience in running

a genomic facility and a thorough understanding of both the technical and bioinformatics issues involved in genome analysis. Excellent organisational, interpersonal and communication skills are essential.

We are also seeking a **Scientific Officer/Higher Scientific Officer** to play an important role in the TPU's work, by developing techniques to analyse patients' tumour tissue samples throughout the course of their treatment. The post holder will work within a tumour transplantation facility to grow and analyse xenografts derived from patients' tumours, as we aim to take the next step in personalised medicine – by allowing doctors to track and respond to molecular changes in an individual patient's cancer.

The role will also involve organisation of the facility and coordination with other activities in the TPU. Applicants should have a BSc in biological sciences and previous experience in in vivo grafting and immunohistochemical analysis. Excellent organisational and communication skills are essential.

For the full job descriptions and details of how to apply please see our website at <http://www.icr.ac.uk/jobsearch>

Job reference number:

1282132 for Genomics Manager position.

1281468 for Scientific Officer/Higher Scientific Officer position.

Closing date: 26 October 2012

U229185R



POSTDOCTORAL POSITIONS IN MAMMALIAN ORGANOGENESIS

POSTDOCTORAL POSITIONS are available to study different aspects of mammalian organogenesis, with a particular focus on the cellular and molecular mechanisms controlling the development of the eye and the lymphatic vasculature using available mouse models. Highly motivated individuals who recently obtained a PhD or MD degree and have a strong background in molecular and developmental biology are encouraged to apply. Interested individuals should send their curriculum vitae, a brief description of their research interests, and the names of three references to:

Guillermo Oliver, PhD
Member
Department of Genetics
St. Jude Children's Research Hospital
332 N. Lauderdale, Memphis, TN 38105
E-mail: guillermo.oliver@stjude.org
<http://www.stjude.org/oliver>

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NW229107R

MONTEREY BAY AQUARIUM RESEARCH INSTITUTE

2013 POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

Applications for the postdoctoral fellowship program at the Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute (MBARI) are currently being accepted. MBARI is dedicated to the development of state-of-the-art instrumentation, systems, and methods for scientific research in the oceans. Ongoing programs in marine robotics, ocean physics, chemistry, geology, and biology as well as information management and ocean instrumentation research and development exist at MBARI. Located in Moss Landing, California at the head of Monterey Bay, MBARI enjoys convenient access to diverse oceanographic environments. The institute operates research vessels equipped with remotely operated vehicles, autonomous underwater vehicles, and diverse oceanographic equipment. In addition, MBARI operates the MARS seafloor cable observatory. MBARI is a non-profit oceanographic research institute supported by the David and Lucile Packard Foundation.

Offers will be made to candidates from the fields of biological, chemical, physical oceanography, marine geology, and ocean engineering. Candidates must be awarded the Ph.D. degree prior to commencing the two-year appointment and start during the 2013 calendar year. Applicants are encouraged to communicate with potential research sponsors at MBARI for guidance on project feasibility, relevance to ongoing research projects, and resource availability (http://www.mbari.org/about/postdoc_mentors.html).

Application deadline: Wednesday, December 12, 2012

Selected candidates will be contacted in early March 2013.

Application requirements:

1. Curriculum vitae
2. At least three professional letters of recommendation
3. Succinct statement of the applicant's doctoral research
4. Potential research goals at MBARI
5. Supplemental information online form (http://www.mbari.org/oed/jobs/forms/postdoc_form_2013.html)

Competitive compensation and benefits package.

MBARI considers all applicants for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, or veteran status.

Address your application materials to:

MBARI, Human Resources
Job code: Postdoc-2013
7700 Sandholdt Road, Moss Landing, CA 95039-9644

Submit by e-mail to: jobs@mbari.org (preferred), or by mail to the above address, or by fax to (831) 775-1620.



EOE • MBARI Welcomes Diversity

NW229103R



Assistant/Associate/Senior Editor (Physical Sciences), China Nature Communications, Shanghai

Nature Publishing Group (NPG) is a division of Macmillan Publishers Ltd, dedicated to serving the academic, professional scientific and medical communities. For further information please visit www.nature.com

Nature Communications is an innovative multidisciplinary science journal, which launched in April 2010. The journal publishes high-quality research from the breadth of the natural sciences, and already has a strong track record of publications. The journal offers rapid publication in an online environment, with Open Access options.

We now have an exciting opportunity for an editorial position in the physical sciences based in our Shanghai office. The ideal candidate will have a PhD (or equivalent), and preferably postdoctoral experience, in chemistry and will be able to demonstrate a keen interest in the natural sciences in general. Editorial experience would be beneficial, but is not required, although applicants with significant editorial experience are encouraged to apply and will potentially be considered for Senior Editor positions.

Reporting to the Executive Editor, China (*Nature Communications*), the successful candidate will play an important role in determining the representation of their field in the journal, and will work closely with the other editors on all aspects of the editorial process, including manuscript selection and overseeing peer review. This role will also entail significant liaison with the scientific community, the Research Journal Chief Editors (UK and US) and the Editorial Advisory Panel. In addition, the successful candidate will be required to represent *Nature Communications* and *Nature Publishing Group* within the scientific community in China through lab visits and seminars and this will form a core part of the position.

This is a demanding and intellectually stimulating position. Broad scientific knowledge and training, excellent literary skills and a keen interest in the practice and communication of science are a prerequisite. The successful candidate must therefore have excellent communication and interpersonal skills. In addition the applicant should be fluent in English whilst skills in Mandarin would be advantageous (although not essential). The salary and benefits will be competitive, reflecting the critical importance and responsibilities of this role.

The role is offered on a full-time, permanent basis and is located in our Shanghai office following an expected 6 month training period in the London office (depending on previous experience).

Any offer of employment will be contingent on the necessary work permits for the UK and China, as applicable, being granted (the Company will provide reasonable assistance with the necessary application process in this respect).

Please note previous applicants should not apply.

Applicants should submit a CV, a covering letter explaining their interest in the post and a Research Highlights piece in the style of *Nature Physics* (300 words) on a recent paper from the literature to <http://jobs.macmillan.com>. Please also confirm your current salary and quote NPG/157/11.

Closing Date: 12th October 2012

nature publishing group **npg**

IN228674R

MRC

Laboratory of
Molecular Biology

Cambridge, UK

Research Group Leader in Cell Biology/Biophysics

Applications are invited for a tenure-track Group Leader to lead a new research group in the Cell Biology Division of the Laboratory of Molecular Biology. The LMB has an exceptional record of ground-breaking research, excellent resources, and outstanding facilities and workshops.

We seek someone addressing fundamental questions in any area of cell biology, or developing methods relevant to cell biology. Approaches based on neurons, yeast, advanced imaging or biophysical methods are of particular interest, but the primary selection criteria are scientific excellence and potential for synergy with our existing research programmes.

Applicants should hold a PhD and have an excellent publication record with outstanding potential for independent research. Substantial core funding will be available.

Find out more about the LMB's Cell Biology Division at <http://www2.mrc-lmb.cam.ac.uk/research/cb>. Informal enquiries may be made to Sean Munro (sean@mrc-lmb.cam.ac.uk).

The salary for this position will be £40,527 - £43,941 per annum and will be supported by 30 days annual leave entitlement, an optional MRC final salary pension scheme and excellent on-site sports and social facilities.

This position will remain open until it is filled; applications received by 19th November 2012 will be given priority.

Applications should include a covering letter and full CV, an outline of current research interests (1 page) and a proposal for future research (up to 2 pages), along with the names and addresses of three referees who have agreed to be contacted prior to interview.

Applications for this post must be made online at http://www.topcareerjobs/Vacancy/lrc67447_2326.aspx. If you do not have access to the Internet, or experience technical difficulties, please contact 01793 867003.

This position is subject to pre-employment screening. For further information about the MRC visit www.mrc.ac.uk.

The Medical Research Council is an Equal Opportunities Employer

U229160R

Three (3) Tenure Track Faculty Positions in BIOLOGY:

One position in Cellular/Molecular and two positions in Animal Physiology within the Biology Dept at York University (Toronto, ON, Canada) all at the Assistant Professor level.

Applications must be received by December 31, 2012 for a start date of July 1, 2013.

Please consult <http://www.yorku.ca/acadjobs> for more information.

York University is an affirmative action employer. The Affirmative Action Program can be found at the website above or a copy can be obtained by calling the affirmative action office at 416-736-5713. All qualified candidates are encouraged to apply; however, Canadian citizens and Permanent Residents will be given priority.

NY229161R

“Based on the huge response to our adverts in *Naturejobs* we have hired many excellent candidates annually. We highly appreciate the kind and professional support of the *Nature* team.”

Karin Osibow,
Program Administrator,
Medical University of Graz, Austria

naturejobs

Research Training Programmes for Clinicians



Applications are invited for the autumn 2013 intake to the Wellcome Trust Research Training Programmes for Clinicians across the UK.

These programmes are flagship schemes that support promising clinicians to undertake rigorous research training.

Successful candidates will develop to become academic clinicians within a structured and mentored training environment.

Three types of programme have been established within institutions across the UK:

- PhD Programmes for Clinicians
- Joint PhD Programmes for Clinicians and Basic Scientists
- Interdisciplinary Training Programmes for Clinicians in Translational Medicine and Therapeutics.



PRINCETON Neuroscience INSTITUTE

Princeton University is committed to the continued expansion and development of neuroscience on its campus. In addition to other outstanding resources, a newly constructed 230,000 square foot building will be opened in late summer 2013 housing state-of-the-art facilities for human brain imaging, cellular and circuit level imaging in non-human species, studies of non-human primates and computation modeling. These new facilities will support the continued growth of neuroscience at Princeton, including the three new positions described below.

Tenured Full Professor Position

The Princeton Neuroscience Institute invites applications for a tenured faculty position at the full or associate professor level, to begin on or after September 2013.

Key selection criteria will be research excellence, originality of science, future impact on the field of neuroscience and related disciplines, and leadership capabilities. Applicants must have an excellent record of research productivity and demonstrate the ability to develop a rigorous research program. We seek applicants pursuing research directions with significant conceptual, theoretical and/or empirical integration across traditional disciplinary boundaries. The successful candidate will join the Neuroscience Institute and may also join a department appropriate to the individual's background and interests, with possibilities including (but not limited to) Psychology, Molecular Biology, Mathematics, Physics, Electrical Engineering and Computer Science. Applicants should be prepared to teach courses both at the undergraduate and graduate levels in neuroscience.

Please submit a curriculum vitae, a brief research description, and contact information for three references at <http://jobs.princeton.edu>, requisition #1200658. Applications will be considered on a rolling basis, and the search will remain open until the position is filled; screening of applications will begin October 31, 2012.

Two Tenure Track Assistant Professor Positions

The Princeton Neuroscience Institute invites applications for two tenure track appointments at the assistant professor level to begin on or after September 2013.

Key selection criteria will be research excellence, originality of science, and future impact on the field of neuroscience and related disciplines. We seek applicants pursuing research directions with significant conceptual, theoretical and/or empirical integration across traditional disciplinary boundaries. The successful candidate will join the Neuroscience Institute and may also join a department appropriate to the individual's background and interests, with possibilities including (but not limited to) Psychology, Molecular Biology, Mathematics, Physics, Electrical Engineering and Computer Science. Applicants should be prepared to teach courses both at the undergraduate and graduate levels in neuroscience.

Please submit a curriculum vitae, a brief research description, and contact information for three references at <http://jobs.princeton.edu>, requisition #1200657. Applications will be considered on a rolling basis, and the search will remain open until the position is filled; screening of applications will begin October 31, 2012.

NW229105P

Yale University School of Medicine

FACULTY POSITION AT THE JUNIOR OR SENIOR LEVEL

DEPARTMENT OF CELLULAR AND MOLECULAR PHYSIOLOGY

The Department of Cellular and Molecular Physiology is conducting a search for new faculty members at the junior level.

The search seeks candidates whose research connects the properties of molecules to the properties of physiological systems, with particular emphasis on integrative or translational research, or research that makes use of genetic techniques.

Excellent opportunities are available for collaborative research, as well as for graduate and medical student teaching. Candidates must hold a Ph.D., M.D., or equivalent degree. Applicants should include a curriculum vitae, a statement of research interests and goals, and should arrange to have three letters of reference sent. Applications should be emailed to leisa.strohmaier@yale.edu in PDF format.

Application Deadline: **November 16, 2012**

Yale University is an
Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer.

NW229101R

Abramson Family Cancer Research Institute Faculty Position

The Abramson Family Cancer Research Institute at the Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania seeks candidates for a Full or Associate Professor position in the tenure track Rank will be commensurate with experience. Applicants must have an M.D. or M.D./Ph.D. or equivalent degree. Board certification is preferred.

This is a joint recruitment of the AFRCI and the Division of Hematology-Oncology in the Department of Medicine. We are seeking candidates who are maintaining an independent, extramurally funded research program on mechanisms of hematologic malignancies and/or solid tumor pathogenesis and progression. Current strengths within the Penn Cancer Community include investigation into the basic mechanisms of cancer metabolism, the tumor microenvironment, epigenetics, responses to stress and/or DNA damage, immune cell responses to pancreatic, breast, melanoma, and other malignancies, tumor dormancy, metastasis, and developmental therapeutics.

The faculty appointment will be in the Department of Medicine and the successful candidate will hold an important leadership position within the AFRCI, as well as play a critical role in the recruitment of future faculty to the Hematology-Oncology Division led by Lynn Schuchter, M.D. Additional information can be found at <http://www.pennmedicine.org/hematology-oncology/>.

The Abramson Family Cancer Research Institute (AFRCI) was established in 1997 through an initial \$100 million gift from Leonard and Madlyn Abramson. Since that time, the Abramson Foundation has committed an additional \$25.5 million towards the AFRCI, which serves as a forum for integrating cancer research, education, and patient care in partnership with the Abramson Cancer Center at the University of Pennsylvania led by Chi Van Dang, M.D., Ph.D. The AFRCI seeks to promote basic science excellence, while transforming scientific breakthroughs into innovative treatments as quickly as possible. As Scientific Director of the AFRCI, M. Celeste Simon, Ph.D., leads an accomplished faculty who hold a variety of leadership roles across undergraduate, graduate, medical, and postdoctoral training at the University of Pennsylvania. Additional information about the AFRCI can be found at <http://www.afrci.upenn.edu>.

Dr. Celeste Simon is the Chair of the Search Committee. Position will remain open until filled. We seek candidates who embrace and reflect diversity in the broadest sense.

The University of Pennsylvania is an equal opportunity, affirmative action employer.

Apply for this position online at:
<http://www.med.upenn.edu/apps/faculty/adindex.php?g323d3049>



Perelman
School of Medicine
UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

NW229049R



Francis Crick Institute Research Group Leaders at the London Research Institute



The London Research Institute (LRI) is Cancer Research UK's flagship research institute, focusing on the analysis of fundamental biological processes involved in cancer. The Institute's international staff works in 50 research groups, housed in well-supported laboratories at Lincoln's Inn Fields in central London, and at Clare Hall in Hertfordshire. LRI encourages pursuit of ambitious and longer term research programmes at the highest level.

In 2015 the LRI will become part of the new Francis Crick Institute, based in a new state-of-the-art research facility at St Pancras in central London. The Crick will use interdisciplinary approaches to investigate the biology of human health and disease, and will work with scientists and research institutions across the UK. In addition to researchers from LRI, the Crick's initial research portfolio will be drawn from the MRC National Institute for Medical Research, and three London universities: UCL, King's College London, and Imperial College London. Read more about the Crick at:

<http://www.crick.ac.uk>

For 2012 recruitment we are interested in outstanding scientists seeking to establish independent and innovative research programmes addressing fundamental questions in:

Cancer biology

Including but not limited to:

Tumour biology: tumour-host interactions, cancer models, human cancer genomics
Genomic integrity: Chromosome Biology, DNA damage and repair, Cell Cycle regulation
Computational biology: Bioinformatics, biological networks, image processing

Informal enquiries may be made by email to

Julian.Downward@cancer.org.uk, John.Diffley@cancer.org.uk

<http://www.london-research-institute.co.uk>

The London Research Institute is core-funded by Cancer Research UK. LRI group leaders receive generous Institute core funding for personnel (research fellows, graduate students and technical support), laboratory consumables, access to the Institute's comprehensive core technology facilities, backed by a substantial laboratory space and equipment package and competitive employment terms.

The LRI recruitment process for 2012 will be carried out jointly with the Crick Institute, and the researchers appointed will move to the new Crick laboratories in 2015.

Applications should include the following files, in .pdf format, and should be submitted online at

<https://lrigroupleader.cancerresearchuk.org>

1. Complete CV
2. Publication List (please separate primary papers and review material)
3. Past and Future research plans (approx. 2000 words)
4. Names and contacts of at least 3 academic referees

YOUR REFEREES will be instructed to submit letters of recommendation online at the time the application is received.

APPLICATION DEADLINE: November 30th 2012.



UNIVERSITY OF UTAH SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

Tenure-track Assistant or Associate Professor of Genetics/Genome Sciences

The Department of Human Genetics at the University of Utah School of Medicine (www.genetics.utah.edu) seeks outstanding applicants for tenure-track positions at the level of Assistant or Associate Professor. We are looking for highly creative scientists who use genetics to investigate complex biological problems. We especially encourage applicants whose research focuses on human and medical genetics using functional, computational, or evolutionary genomics and/or model organisms. As part of a vibrant community of collaborative faculty on campus, the Department of Human Genetics lies at the interface between basic and clinical sciences, creating ample opportunities for interdisciplinary studies. Our institution is set in a unique recreational and geographical landscape that attracts a very diverse and productive scientific community. Successful candidates will receive a generous startup package and enjoy a stimulating research environment that places a strong emphasis on innovation and interaction.

To apply for this position, please see the following website: <http://utah.peopleadmin.com/postings/18655>

For questions regarding this posting or your application, please contact Natalie Johnson at: njohnson@genetics.utah.edu

The University of Utah is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action employer and educator. Minorities, women, and persons with disabilities are strongly encouraged to apply. Veterans preference. Reasonable accommodations provided. For additional information: <http://www.regulations.utah.edu/humanResources/5-106.html>.

The University of Utah values candidates who have experience working in settings with students from diverse backgrounds, and possess a [strong or demonstrated] commitment to improving access to higher education for historically underrepresented students.

The University of Utah Health Sciences Center is a patient focused center distinguished by collaboration, excellence, leadership, and respect. The University of Utah HSC values candidates who are committed to fostering and furthering the culture of compassion, collaboration, innovation, accountability, diversity, integrity, quality, and trust that is integral to the mission of the University of Utah Health Sciences Center.

NW22832R

Physician-Scientist Investigators in Gastroenterology and Hepatology

Weill Cornell Medical College

The Division of Gastroenterology and Hepatology of the Department of Medicine, Weill Cornell Medical College, in conjunction with the Center for Advanced Digestive Care, New York-Presbyterian Hospital/Weill Cornell Medical Center, have two tenure-track faculty positions available for investigators. One position is for an individual engaged in fundamental laboratory research in the area of inflammatory bowel disease, and the other position is for an investigator working in the general area of hepatocyte development and biology. Candidates are expected to qualify for faculty positions at the Assistant Professor level at Weill Cornell Medical College, and to have or will have NIH funding for their research. Physician-scientists with M.D. or combined M.D.-Ph.D. degrees are preferred. Competitive start-up packages and laboratory resources will be provided. Applications will be considered until November 15, 2012.

Interested candidates should send their curriculum vitae to: **Andrew I. Schafer, M.D., Chair of Gastroenterology-Hepatology Research Search Committee, c/o Beverly Borg, 525 East 68th Street, Box 130, M-522, New York, NY 10065 or by Email: bborg@med.cornell.edu**

EOE/M/F/D/V

NW229106R



Faculty Position – Bioinformatics

Heal the sick, advance the science, share the knowledge.

The Division of Biomedical Statistics & Informatics in the Department of Health Sciences Research at Mayo Clinic is seeking applications for a full-time, institutionally funded faculty position at the Associate Consultant level in the Bioinformatics Program. The candidate will be responsible for fostering collaboration with investigators from the Center for Individualized Medicine (CIM) and for advancing bioinformatics research activities aligned with the needs of one of the prioritized research areas of CIM: i.e., Biomarker Discovery, Pharmacogenomics and Microbiome. The development and success of the Center for Individualized Medicine is considered a top strategic research priority by Mayo Clinic Leadership.

The candidate should have a PhD in bioinformatics, biology, biophysics, physics or related field and at least 5 years' experience in research. He or she must have strong domain expertise in genomics data preprocessing, data analysis, data interpretation and data integration. The candidate should have demonstrated ability to develop collaboration with investigators and be able to independently and successfully initiate and develop research projects. He or she should be able to lead and give scientific directions to a team of support staff. The preferred candidate will have published research work on Next Generation Sequencing data, and should have experience preparing and submitting proposals for extramural funding, and experience presenting research findings at regional, national or international conferences. He or she must have proficiency in scripting language and/or programming language. Flexibility, creativity and excellent communication skills are required.

This position can be based in Arizona, Florida or Minnesota.

Mayo Clinic is a premier academic medical center with over 3,800 physicians and scientists in a unified multi-campus system. This unique environment brings together the best in patient care, groundbreaking research and innovative medical education. While Mayo Clinic does not offer tenure positions, our policies and practices demonstrate a commitment to ongoing positions. Mayo Clinic offers a highly competitive compensation package with sustained intramural funding, outstanding laboratory facilities, capital equipment funding, technical and computational resources and exceptional benefits.

To apply and learn more, please visit www.mayoclinic.org/scientist-jobs/ and reference **job posting number 6627BR**. Applications should include a cover letter, CV and a statement of research interests. Specific questions related to the posting should be directed to:

Jean-Pierre Kocher, PhD
Associate Professor of Medical Informatics
Mayo Clinic
E-mail: schilbe.jennifer@mayo.edu

Mayo Foundation is an affirmative action and equal opportunity educator and employer. Post-offer/pre-employment drug screening is required.

Scan this QR code with your smartphone and begin your job search.



NW229102R

IST AUSTRIA LOOKS FOR PROFESSORS AND ASSISTANT PROFESSORS



IST Austria (Institute of Science and Technology Austria) invites applications for Professors and Assistant Professors in physics, chemistry, biology, neuroscience, earth science, mathematics, computer science, and interdisciplinary areas.

The Institute, which is located on the outskirts of Vienna, is dedicated to basic research and graduate education in the natural and mathematical sciences. IST Austria is committed to become a world-class research center with 1000 scientists and doctoral students by 2026. The working language at IST Austria is English.

The Institute recruits tenured and tenure-track leaders of independent research groups. The successful candidates will receive a substantial annual research budget but are expected to also apply for external research grants.

IST Austria values diversity and is committed to equality. Female researchers are encouraged to apply.

To apply online, please consult:

www.ist.ac.at/professor-applications

Deadline for receiving Assistant Professor applications: **December 1, 2012**

Open call for Professor applications



Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY | EARTH INSTITUTE

Postdoctoral Fellowships in the Earth, Environmental, and Ocean Sciences

Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory of Columbia University invites applications for Postdoctoral fellowships in the fields of the earth, environmental or ocean sciences. Candidates should have recently completed their Ph.D. or should expect to complete their degree requirements by September, 2013.

Researchers at the Observatory work to understand the dynamics of the earth's chemical, physical and biological systems, from the core to the upper atmosphere, including interactions with humankind. The principal selection criteria for Fellows are scientific excellence and a clearly expressed plan to investigate problems at the forefront of earth science.

Our scientists lead research in the fields of solid earth dynamics (e.g. seismology, geodesy, mantle dynamics, petrology/geochemistry, earthquake and rock mechanics, marine and continental tectonics/geology/geophysics), ocean and atmospheric dynamics (e.g. climate/paleoclimate, climate forecasting, physical/chemical oceanography) and life sciences (e.g. biological oceanography, biogeosciences, plant physiology, paleontology). Applications from all fields are encouraged.

The fellowships are supported institutionally for 21 months, include a \$5,000 research allowance, and carry an annual stipend of \$58,000. Successful candidates will be encouraged to apply for external funding and may be eligible for further internal awards and positions.

The deadline for completed applications for the Postdoctoral Fellowship is December 21, 2012. Award announcement will be in March, 2013.

Application forms should be completed online and submitted electronically –
<http://www.ldeo.columbia.edu/postdocs>

For more information contact: The Office of the Director - Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory of
Columbia University, Palisades, NY 10964

Telephone: 845-365-8546 • Fax: 845-365-8162 • director@ldeo.columbia.edu

Related Postdoctoral Opportunities are available at the Earth Institute at Columbia University
<http://www.earthinstitute.columbia.edu/postdoc/>

Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory is committed to diversity. Columbia University is an
Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer.

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CHAIR, DEPARTMENT OF CELL BIOLOGY

The UMDNJ-School of Osteopathic Medicine is seeking applications from distinguished academic scientists for the position of Chairperson of the Department of Cell Biology. Located in the greater Philadelphia area of southern New Jersey, the UMDNJ-School of Osteopathic Medicine has recently expanded its facilities and is continuing to develop its campus as part of the restructuring of public higher education in medicine and the health sciences in New Jersey. The Basic Science Departments emphasize molecular biology and cellular function and are housed in a modern, fully-equipped research building.

We are seeking candidates who have an outstanding record of research achievements and previous administrative experience, and who are dedicated to the development of high quality educational programs. The successful candidate will be expected to guide the expansion of extramurally funded research and work with the Department of Molecular Biology in joint research and graduate education programs. Present faculty research areas encompass cell signaling, circadian rhythms, cardiovascular pathophysiology, vascular and leukocyte biology, micro RNAs, neurodegenerative diseases, ribosome biogenesis, stem cell biology and transcription mechanisms. The Department of Cell Biology participates in the instruction of both graduate and medical students. Appointment will be made at the Professor level with an anticipated start date by July 2013.

Letters of application, curriculum vitae, and the names, addresses and telephone numbers of four references should be submitted to: Carl E. Hock, Ph.D., Associate Dean for Research and Senior Associate Dean, Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences, Chair, Search Committee, c/o Mr. Joshua Lubin, Director of Operations, UMDNJ-School of Osteopathic Medicine, One Medical Center Drive, Academic Center 305, Stratford, NJ 08084 or email: lubinj@umdnj.edu. Electronic submissions are encouraged, although paper applications will also be accepted. Interested candidates are encouraged to apply by December 31, 2012. UMDNJ is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer. The Stratford campus is a tobacco-free workplace.



SCHOOL OF
OSTEOPATHIC
MEDICINE

University of Medicine & Dentistry of New Jersey

NW229110PS

UNIVERSITY of VIRGINIA

FACULTY POSITION Biochemistry & Molecular Genetics

The Department of Biochemistry & Molecular Genetics in the School of Medicine at the University of Virginia (www.virginia.edu/bmg) seeks candidates for a tenure-track faculty position (Assistant or Associate Professor). The successful candidates' research should address contemporary problems in the biology of the nucleus, genomics and computational biology, with emphasis on processes that are important in human disease.

Candidates must hold a Ph.D. and/or M.D. in Biochemistry or a related field and must have demonstrated the capacity to develop and/or maintain a high-quality independent research program. Applicants with outstanding credentials from all fields will be considered. Support will include attractive start-up packages, laboratory space, and an exceptionally interactive research environment.

To apply, visit <https://jobs.virginia.edu> and search on Posting Number 0610723. Complete a Candidate Profile online, attach a cover letter, curriculum vitae, and statement of research interest (two pages or less including references). Three letters of recommendation should be submitted electronically, directly to hnb6@virginia.edu with the applicant's name in the subject heading.

For additional information please contact, please contact Helen Norliet-Shifflet, Department of Biochemistry & Molecular Genetics, via telephone (434) 924-1667 or email hnb6@virginia.edu.

The University of Virginia is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative employer. Women, minorities, veterans and persons with disabilities are encouraged to apply.

NW229192PS

Faculty Opening – Washington University in St. Louis Experimental Condensed Matter/Materials Physics

The Department of Physics in the School of Arts and Sciences announces a tenure-track faculty opening at the assistant professor level in Experimental Condensed Matter/Materials Physics. This hire is designed to enhance activities within the Physics Department and in a new Institute for Materials Science and Engineering, which will be formally commissioned in July 2013. The duties of the position will include, but are not limited to, teaching and advising students, conducting original research and publishing the results, and participating in departmental and university service. A PhD in a relevant field is required. Candidates are sought who have highly visible research achievements and who have a strong aptitude for teaching and mentoring students at the undergraduate and graduate levels. The appointment will begin Fall 2013. Information on our department can be found at <http://www.physics.wustl.edu>.

Applications should consist of the following: cover letter, current resume including publication record, statement of research interests and plans (up to 5 pages), statement of teaching interests and approach (up to 3 pages), and names and complete contact information (including email addresses) of three references. Application materials must be submitted electronically by email as a single file in editable (e.g. not password protected) PDF format to cmresearch@physics.wustl.edu. For full consideration applications should be submitted on or before **November 1, 2012**.

Washington University is an equal opportunity/equal access/affirmative action institution. Women and minorities are encouraged to apply.

NW229638R

Tenured Professor in Physics



The Department of Physics seeks to appoint a tenured professor in the field of Experimental Quantum Condensed Matter Physics. The appointment is expected to begin on July 1, 2013.

The professor will teach and advise at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

Demonstrated excellence in teaching and research is desired. Candidates should also evince intellectual leadership and impact on the field and potential for significant contributions to the department, University, and wider scholarly community. Please submit the following materials through the ARIeS portal <http://academicpositions.harvard.edu/postings/4320>, no later than November 1, 2012:

1. Cover Letter.
2. Curriculum Vitae and publication list.
3. Teaching statement as well as evidence of teaching excellence (e.g. course evaluations, if available).
4. Research statement.

Harvard is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action employer.

Applications from women and minorities are strongly encouraged.

NW229207R



university of
 groningen



The University of Groningen has 28 tenure track positions now available in its prestigious Rosalind Franklin Fellowship programme. The programme is primarily aimed at ambitious women in industry, academia or research institutes who have a PhD and aspire to a career towards full professorship in a European top research university. We invite talented and creative academics to apply.

Since its inception in 1614, the University of Groningen has enjoyed an international reputation as a dynamic and innovative centre of higher education offering high-quality teaching and research. Balanced study and career paths in a wide variety of disciplines encourage the 27,000 students and researchers to develop their own individual talents. Belonging to the best universities in Europe and by joining forces with prestigious partner universities and networks, the University of Groningen is truly an international place of knowledge.



Rosalind Franklin Fellowships

28 Tenure Track positions

are available in the following areas:

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Economics and Business

Law

Mathematics and Natural Sciences

Philosophy

Spatial Sciences

Theology and Religious Studies

Medical and Life Sciences

For more information about these fellowships, the requirements and the procedure for application, please visit our website www.rug.nl/rff

W228741R

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www.rug.nl

“When trying to recruit good scientists for such a remote institutions like ours, in the Canary Is., the high visibility and wide-range exposure that Naturejobs provides has been crucial. I'm very happy to have international candidates who applied to our position from places ranging between St. Petersburg and Cincinnati. Thanks a lot!”

Eduardo Salido, MD, PhD,
Hospital Universitario de Canarias

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UNIVERSITY OF
LIVERPOOL

Faculty of Science and Engineering
School of Physical Sciences, Department of Chemistry

4 Research Co-ordinators

£37,012 - £46,846 pa

Research Co-ordinator positions are available in the group of Professor M J Rosseinsky FRS. A strong publication record and the ability to take responsibility in a research organisation are essential. The roles are ideal for ambitious candidates with intellectual curiosity and a desire to be part of a multidisciplinary environment. The potential for high levels of achievement to become future leaders in materials science must be demonstrated. The posts are available for 5 years.

Research Co-ordinator (Computational)

You should have a PhD in Chemistry, Physics or Materials Science and excellent research skills in computational materials chemistry (oxides, porous materials, hybrid materials, nanomaterials). The role will enable an ambitious scientist to develop characterisation and/or computational techniques and influence the strategic direction of the research group in the broad area of new materials discovery. Candidates with experience in computational materials chemistry or physics and magnetic and electrical measurement of materials are encouraged to apply. Job Ref: R-580740/N

Research Co-ordinator (Bio-Engineering)

You should have a PhD in Chemistry, Biochemistry, Molecular Biology or Materials Science and excellent research skills in bionanotechnology and materials synthesis. The role will enable a forward thinking scientist to develop projects in new areas at the biology-materials interface, using molecular biology in new materials discovery. Job Ref: R-580737/N

Research Co-ordinator (Synthetic)

You should have a PhD in Chemistry, Physics or Materials Science and excellent research skills in synthetic chemistry (functional materials, small molecule and/or polymer synthesis, porous materials). Skills in at least two of the following diffraction methods, sorption measurements, energy materials, equipment/measurement development, bionanomaterials, molecular synthesis and thin films are desirable. The role will enable an ambitious scientist to develop synthetic techniques and influence the strategic direction of the research group in the broad area of new materials discovery. Job Ref: R-580742/N

Research Co-ordinator (General)

You should have a PhD in Chemistry, Physics or Materials Science and excellent research skills in synthetic materials chemistry and characterisation (oxides, porous materials, hybrid materials, nanomaterials). Skills in at least two of the following diffraction methods, sorption measurements, energy materials, equipment/measurement development, bionanomaterials, molecular synthesis and thin films are desirable. The role will focus on the most challenging areas of new materials synthesis and characterisation, and has considerable scope for contribution to strategic planning and development of new research directions. Candidates with experience in ceramic oxide synthesis, materials for energy conversion and energy storage technologies and photocatalytic materials are particularly encouraged to apply. Job Ref: R-580741/N

Faculty of Health and Life Sciences
Institute of Translational Medicine
Department of Gastroenterology

Postdoctoral Research Associate

£31,020 - £35,939 pa

You will join a team to undertake metabolomic studies based on GCMS of biological samples and develop fast through-put pathways for data analysis. Candidates will be considered from the fields of Biochemistry, Analytical Chemistry and Systems Biology. The post is part of the University's continued and significant commitment to the gastroenterology.

You should have a PhD in biochemistry, molecular biology, cancer biology or related subject with a developing track record in research. Attractive support packages will be available together with high quality laboratory research space. The post is available for 1 year, with the possibility of extension for a further 2 years. Job Ref: R-580559/N

Closing date for all posts: 26 October 2012

For full details, or to request an application pack, visit
www.liv.ac.uk/working/job_vacancies/ or e-mail jobs@liv.ac.uk
Please quote job ref in all enquiries.

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Major initiative in Diabetes, Endocrinology and Metabolism

Imperial College London is making a substantial new investment in Diabetes, Endocrinology and Metabolism. We plan to make senior academic appointments to build upon existing strengths and develop a world-leading translational research programme in collaboration with Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust.

The Faculty of Medicine has particular strengths in Diabetes, Endocrinology and Metabolism. There are major research programmes in gut hormones and obesity, genetics of obesity and diabetes, the pathogenesis of diabetes, mechanisms of thyroid hormone action, and bone and mineral metabolism.

We are seeking clinical or non-clinical academics with highly innovative research objectives and a track record of high quality publications. The new appointments will strengthen or complement our existing outstanding research activities.

The level of appointment (Professor, Reader, Senior Lecturer or Lecturer) and the generous supporting package will be determined according to experience. There is provision for individually negotiated appointments and appropriately tailored job descriptions to encourage innovative research approaches or clinical translational work.

Imperial College London provides an outstanding multidisciplinary environment in basic, clinical and translational research with excellent laboratory facilities. This is a unique career opportunity for individuals with the vision, leadership ability and ambition to be among the best in the field.

Interested individuals are encouraged to make informal enquiries to Ms Sharon Gould, dembord@imperial.ac.uk; tel: +44 (0)20 8383 3242.

Committed to equality and valuing diversity. We are also an Athena Bronze SWAN Award winner, a Stonewall Diversity Champion and a Two Ticks Employer.



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**UNIKLINIK
KÖLN**

The Faculty of Medicine of the University of Cologne invites applications for the position of a tenured appointment, starting 1st of August in 2013, as

Professor (W3) of Cell Biology

Associated with the professorship is a seat on the board of the Institute I of Anatomy (Medical Cell Biology and Microscopic Anatomy) at the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Cologne as well as the teaching of cell biology and microscopic anatomy to medical and dental students. The primary objective of the new appointment is the development of an internationally competitive research programme in cell biology in close connection to the major research areas of the Medical Faculty, the Centre for Molecular Medicine Cologne and the Cologne Excellence Cluster on Cellular Stress Responses in Aging-Associated Diseases (CECAD).

We seek renowned individuals with a proven track record of research and international recognition in cell biology with eminent professional skills in microscopy (live imaging, cellular trafficking, centrosome biology etc. and/or ultrastructural imaging). Further requirements are comprehensive teaching experiences and the motivation to actively contribute to the development of the model curriculum of medical studies at the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Cologne and to other degree and graduate programmes in which the Faculty of Medicine participates. Close collaboration with the local Max Planck Institutes for Biology of Aging and Neurological Research and the collaborative research centres are appreciated.

Applications from women are explicitly invited. When equally qualified and suited for the position, women will be preferred unless there are strong arguments in favour of another applicant. Applications from severely handicapped persons are particularly welcome. If equally qualified severely handicapped applicants will be preferred.

Applicants are requested to send their curriculum vitae, description of previous professional activity, compilation of teaching activities and other documentation of teaching qualifications, teaching concept, list of publications with reprints of the five most important publications, copies of certificates and diplomas and list of external grants by 16.11.2012 to the Dean of the Medical Faculty, University of Cologne, 50924 Cologne, Germany.

W292933R



**Assistant, Associate or Full Professor
of Quantitative Ecology
School of Integrative Biology
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign**

The School of Integrative Biology and the Department of Plant Biology at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign invite applications for a full-time, nine-month, tenure-track or tenured faculty position in integrative plant biology at the rank of Assistant, Associate or Full Professor. Target start date is 16 August 2013. We seek an outstanding ecologist who uses mathematical, statistical, modeling, or theoretical approaches to study ecosystem dynamics at community to global scales. Research areas of focus include, but are not limited to, ecological forecasting, biosphere-atmosphere interactions, and climate change. The successful candidate will be expected to develop an externally funded research program, teach at undergraduate and graduate levels, and collaborate with faculty to develop research and education initiatives in quantitative ecology and mathematical biology. She/he will have the opportunity to be part of dynamic and well-established communities of integrative biologists with interests spanning a wide range of taxa in the School of Integrative Biology, as well as in a number of interdisciplinary programs across the campus. A Ph.D. or equivalent is required. Postdoctoral experience is desirable for candidates at the assistant professor level. Associate and full professor candidates should present an established record of scholarly publications and demonstrate excellence in teaching. Salary and rank are commensurate with qualifications and experience.

To ensure full consideration, please create your candidate profile through <http://go.illinois.edu/QuantitativeEcology> and upload your application letter, curriculum vitae, summary of research and plans, teaching philosophy and experience, and contact information for three professional references by 21 October 2012. After a review of the research record, the search committee may then contact the applicant about soliciting letters of reference.

Applicants may be interviewed before the closing date; however, no hiring decision will be made until after that date. For further information contact Quantitative Ecology Search Chair, sib@life.illinois.edu.

Illinois is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer and welcomes individuals with diverse backgrounds, experiences, and ideas who embrace value diversity and inclusivity.
(www.inclusiveillinois.illinois.edu)

NW223045R



**Drug Discovery Programme
Head of Biology**

The Beatson Drug Discovery Programme (DDP) has been established as an Industry Standard Unit at the cutting edge of drug discovery. Exploiting the basic biology strengths within the Beatson Institute and wider Cancer Research UK network the programme will target some of the most exciting and challenging cancer targets.

We are seeking a highly motivated and talented scientist for the post of Head of Biology. A competitive personal salary package is available for a suitably qualified candidate. You will work closely with the academic Group Leaders to help identify new targets for the Beatson DDP as well as leading the screening, cellular biology and in vivo aspects of the programme. Reporting to the Head of Drug Discovery, you will have a fundamental role in directing the overall strategy of the programme.

A Ph.D. in a relevant discipline plus experience of small molecule drug discovery in industry is essential. Strong leadership and interpersonal skills are also required.

Applications with CV and names of three referees should be sent to beatson@beatson.gla.ac.uk. Informal enquiries are welcome and should be addressed to Dr Martin Drysdale, Head of Drug Discovery, m.drysdale@beatson.gla.ac.uk

Closing date: 02 November 2012

CANCER RESEARCH UK



Drug Discovery Programme – Glasgow

Scientist, Surface Plasmon Resonance

The Beatson Drug Discovery Programme is an industry standard unit at the cutting edge of drug discovery. Exploiting the basic biology strengths within the Beatson Institute and wider Cancer Research UK network, the programme targets some of the most exciting and challenging cancer targets. Central to our strategy is Fragment-Based Drug Discovery methods and we intend to use NMR and Surface Plasmon Resonance as primary tools for fragment-based hit identification.

We are seeking a highly motivated and talented scientist who will have a key role in our drug discovery team. You will assume responsibility for our Surface Plasmon Resonance facility (Biacore 4000 and Biacore T200), working closely with colleagues within the Biology group as well as Structural Biologists and Chemists from the wider team. In this role you will develop and validate SPR assays to facilitate hit identification, validation and optimisation.

You will either be a highly skilled SPR scientist or a talented Masters/PhD graduate keen to train in this exciting area. You will bring a creative approach to problem solving, good interpersonal skills and to be comfortable working in a dynamic, multi-disciplinary environment. A good understanding of the drug discovery process would be of benefit.

In return, you will receive a competitive benefits package commensurate with your skills and experience and find at the Beatson, an inspiring, supportive and creative atmosphere where your contribution really will make a difference.

Applications with CV and names of three referees should be sent to beatson@beatson.gla.ac.uk

Closing date for applications is October 26th, 2012.

CANCER RESEARCH UK

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Ask the Expert is located in the **Career Toolkit** section of naturejobs.com



BOSTON UNIVERSITY

Bioinformatics Graduate Program Faculty Position in Computational Biology

The Bioinformatics Graduate Program at Boston University invites applications from energetic and promising scientists for a tenure-track assistant professorship in computational biology. The Program, centered in the interdisciplinary Life Sciences and Engineering Building in the heart of Boston, is University-wide and includes some 50 faculty from the Colleges of Engineering and Arts and Sciences, components of the Medical campus including the National Emerging Infectious Diseases Laboratory (NEIDL), and adjunct faculty from major biotechnology companies, the Broad Institute, Harvard Medical School and the National Institutes of Health. Graduate students are drawn from diverse disciplines, and selection is extremely competitive. More than 60 PhD students are currently pursuing leading edge research in areas ranging from whole-genome analysis, structural genomics, and systems biology, to clinical applications (<http://www.bu.edu/bioinformatics/>). The successful candidate will be associated with an academic department in the College of Arts and Sciences or the College of Engineering as well as with the Bioinformatics Program.

Candidates must have concrete plans for establishing a world-class research program in computational biology. Areas of interest include systems biology, synthetic biology, evolutionary biology, immunology, genetics, and genomics. Exceptionally strong candidates in other areas may also be considered. Candidates must have a strong background in both biology and computation, with primary training in mathematical statistics, chemistry, physics, computer science, or a life science. Teaching experience in the candidate's area of expertise is highly desirable.

Review of applications will begin on 30 November and continue until the position is filled. Applicants must apply through AcademicJobsOnline.org, job reference number 1875, by submitting a CV, a complete bibliography, a research plan, a statement of teaching interests, and at least three letters of recommendation.

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The Welsh Government has committed £50 million to the Sêr Cymru programme to attract world-leading scientists to Wales and to support the establishment of collaborative National Research Networks in three 'Grand Challenge' research areas:

- Life sciences and health.
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Sêr Cymru aims to increase the value of scientific research to the Welsh economy by developing further an already successful research base, increasing collaboration and expanding facilities and capability in Wales.

The Opportunities

In conjunction with Welsh research institutes, the Welsh Government is seeking Expressions of Interest from:

- World-leading researchers, or Welsh universities, for prestigious Research Chairs with the possibility of additional funding for staff and equipment costs.
- Welsh research institutions to set-up National Research Networks that will grow and shape the future direction of research in Wales.
- High calibre individuals to become Network Directors to lead the National Research Networks and support research excellence in Wales.

Deadline 16th November 2012 for Expressions of Interest.

For further information about the application process and Expressions of Interest pro forma please visit www.wales.gov.uk/sercymru

For this announcement in the medium of Welsh, please visit www.cymru.gov.uk/sercymru

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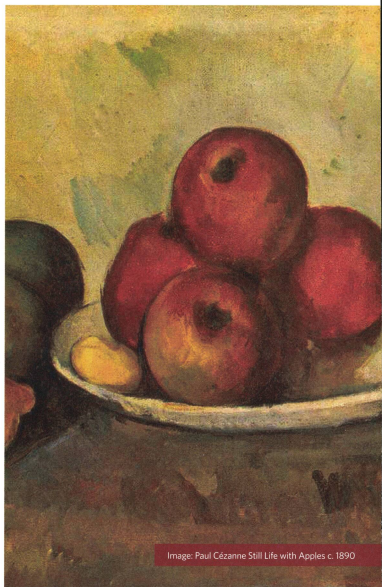


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2013 Novartis Prizes for Immunology



The 2013 Novartis Prizes, one for Basic Immunology and one for Clinical Immunology are awarded for outstanding achievements in the understanding of immunology and major immunological discoveries that resulted in therapeutic applications in such fields as autoimmune and inflammatory diseases, transplantation, cancer immunotherapy, infectious diseases, dermatology and asthma. For more information, please visit www.novartisimmunologyprizes.org

The next Novartis Prizes for Immunology will be awarded at the XVth International Congress of Immunology in Milan, Italy in a special Award Ceremony on August 23, 2013.

Each prize is endowed with SFr 100,000.

Nominations in English should include a summary of the major research activities in up to 2 pages, curriculum vitae, and a bibliography containing the most relevant publications pertaining to the candidate's nomination.

The deadline for entries is 25 January 2013.

Nominations should be sent electronically to: novartisprizes@gmail.com

Dr. Jan E. de Vries, Secretary of the Novartis Prizes for Immunology, P.O. Box 2501, La Jolla, CA, 92037, USA.



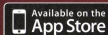
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MAN'S BEST FRIEND

Animal instincts.

BY GRACE TANG

"Come on girl, you can do it," I gently coaxed Dr Gleitman's latest subject as she shook off the last of the drugs and struggled to lift herself from the bed. At three years of age, Callie was Dr Gleitman's youngest subject to date. Her dark brown eyes glinted as she gradually blinked them open, adjusting to the harsh fluorescent lights of the post-op recovery room.

The matte black chassis of the neural implant peeked out from a small bald patch between the fine gold strands on her head. Even though I was not the one who put it on her, as Dr Gleitman's research assistant, I felt a twinge of guilt that I was subjecting her to this painful procedure — without her consent, no less, as she was unable to give it before the operation. But then again, God did not obtain consent when he created Man from the clay.

And now Man was imparting God's greatest gifts to his best friend. I'd spent a good portion of my working life in this lab, and even though I'd seen countless animals pass through these halls, I'd grown fond of Callie since we'd got her from the local pound, a day before she was scheduled to be put down. She was up on her feet now. She sniffed cautiously at me.

I wondered what vocation she would be assigned to as I leaned in close to her and let her lick my face. Because our funding came from the military, primates were usually used in jungle warfare. Cats, with their excellent night vision and stealth, were used in reconnaissance. Dogs usually went to the army or police, for more traditional roles as sniffers or for search-and-rescue. With her gentle demeanour, Callie probably would not be an attack dog. I heard that augmented animals were being used for therapeutic procedures now. Maybe she would be trained to be a seeing-eye dog, or used in the treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder?

"Your name is Callie. Can you say Callie?"

Of course I was not expecting her to *speak*, in the strictest sense of the word. Her lips were not shaped for speech, and unlike the apes, her limbs were not shaped for signing. Her ears perked up, and she tilted her head in the most endearing way.

"Cal...lie...?"

The single red LED

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on the speech synthesizer blinked, indicating that the implant had successfully extracted, from the spatial and temporal firing patterns across hundreds of thousands of Callie's neurons, her thoughts, emotions and intentions, and further transduced those signals to spoken words, complete with affective tone, closely mimicking human speech. Dr Gleitman had added yet another success to his list.



I darted over to the adjoining office where Dr Gleitman was asleep in his reclining chair, feeling Callie's inquisitive eyes on me as I left the room. Normally, I would not disturb him, but I thought he might want to know that his latest subject was awake and talking. I nudged his hand. He jumped slightly, disoriented for a second.

"What is it, Moe?"

"Callie's unit is already functional, Sir! She managed to say her name when I asked her to."

The poorly masked irritation at having his nap interrupted melted away into a satisfied smile.

"So quickly? That's incredible. She must be the most talented canine we've had yet. Usually it takes at least a full day for speech comprehension to begin, let alone production of the first word."

He rose from his chair and walked to where Callie was busy pawing at her

Elizabethan collar. "I wonder if it's because her youth makes her brain more malleable and lends itself better to the implant. Or perhaps it's because she's female. Moe, can you make a note of this?"

I went to the corner of the lab where the video recorder was and made notes for the day, watching Dr Gleitman interact with Callie as I narrated my observations.

"Hi Callie, do you understand me? Do you know where you are?" Dr Gleitman was already trying to extract complete sentences from her. That usually took weeks. Clearly he expected more from her compared with his previous subjects.

When I was done, I eagerly returned to Callie's bedside. I worked up the courage to ask Dr Gleitman the question that had been burning inside me ever since we brought her home.

"Do you think you will keep her?"

He looked shocked — perhaps I had spoken out of place. Surely he would say no, and Callie would be deployed to some faraway base, where I'd never see her again. But his face softened.

"I've actually thought about it. Because of her exceptional performance, I could easily argue for her to be kept here for observation and testing. Not to mention, I'm developing a soft spot for you Golden Retrievers."

I could barely keep still in my excitement, until I remembered what Dr Gleitman had said about behaving more like a human and not like a stray pup if I wanted to keep my job in the lab. But it was hard keeping my tail still when the news was making Callie's tail wag so fast that she was sending strands of fur flying. Dr Gleitman was grinning widely at the sight. In time he would teach her to use language to convey her thoughts instead of these primal displays of emotion, as he had done with me.

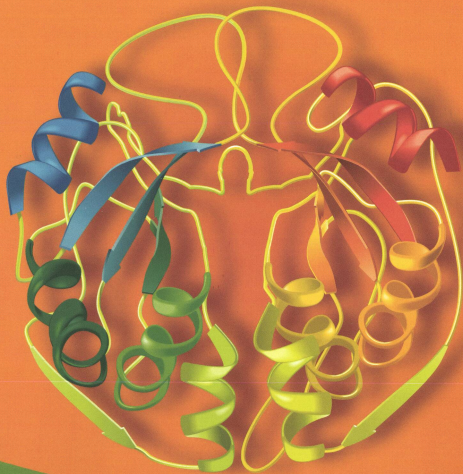
"Well I'm pleased both of you are happy with this arrangement. You'll have to do the paperwork though, Moe."

"Gladly!" I would get started on that later, but for now I thought of what to say to welcome the latest addition to our home. ■

Grace Tang is a graduate student in psychology at Stanford University. One of her greatest wishes is to have a talking animal sidekick.

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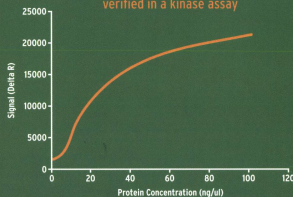
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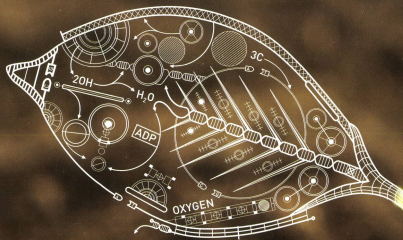
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